

A
'70
H113

TOWARD A MISSION STRATEGY
TO THE EMERGING URBAN MIDDLE STRATA
IN COLOMBIA

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Theology
at Claremont, California

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Religion

by
Howard J. Habegger

June 1970

PERMISSION TO COPY
THIS DISSERTATION
FOR PRIVATE USE ONLY

This dissertation, written by

Howard J. Habegger

*under the direction of his Faculty Committee,
and approved by its members, has been presented
to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of
Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF RELIGION

Faculty Committee

Harvey J. Seifert
Harvey J. Seifert, Chairman

Eric L. Titus
Eric L. Titus

Date June 1970

F. C. Trotter
F. Thomas Trotter, Dean

Dedicated

to

MARLENE

la compa era de mi vida

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In The New Man For Our Time, Elton Trueblood writes, "No man is strong enough or devout enough to operate alone." I am indebted to several persons which indicates I did not operate alone in the research and writing of this dissertation.

I am especially grateful to Harvey J. Seifert for his generous amounts of time, valuable suggestions, and words of encouragement throughout the study. I appreciated the help of Eric L. Titus with some of the precise terminology in the dissertation. I particularly wish to thank John B. Housley of Pomona College who served as a special advisor. His knowledge of and experience in Latin America provided me with resources and insights which otherwise would have been overlooked.

An expression of thanks to Degi Wilson who read the text with a grammarian's eye and made the necessary corrections. A special word of thanks to Marlene, my wife, who lived every phase of the research and writing with me. She performed the role of encourager, listener, corrector, and was the typist of each draft.

This dissertation would not have been written without the experience of having lived and worked in Colombia as a missionary. I am deeply indebted to my fellow Colombian and North American colleagues for the privilege of having served and shared with them in the life and ministry of the Mennonite Church in Colombia from 1963 to 1968.

Howard J. Habegger
Claremont, California
June 1970

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.	1
Purpose of Study	2
Methodology of Study	3
Definition of Terms.	5
Limitations of Study	7
 I. THE RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF COLOMBIA	 9
Pre-Columbian Religion and Culture	9
The Advent of Spanish Roman Catholicism.	10
The Entrance and Emergence of Protestantism.	13
 II. THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN SITUATION.	 23
The Phenomenon of Urbanization	23
The Reasons for Urbanization	24
The Effects of Urbanization.	26
 III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE URBAN MIDDLE STRATA.	 34
The Location of the Urban Middle Strata.	34
The Identification of the New Urban Middle Strata.	36
The Social Values of the Urban Middle Strata: Traditional Toward Transitional.	38
The Aspirations of the Urban Middle Strata	42
 IV. THE CURRENT MISSION STRATEGY MODELS	 47
The Pentecostal Model.	47
The Traditional Model.	54
The Revolutionary Model.	60
 V. THE LOCI OF THE SITUATIONAL MISSION STRATEGY MODEL.	 70
The Urban Locus.	70
The Middle Strata Locus.	75
The Strategic Groups' Locus.	85

CHAPTER	PAGE
VI. THE THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE SITUATIONAL MISSION STRATEGY MODEL.	96
Important Priorities in the Message.	96
The Church as Community.	105
The Meaning of Mission	110
VII. THE METHODOLOGY OF THE SITUATIONAL MISSION STRATEGY MODEL	121
Toward an Urban Ministry	121
Toward Some New Forms.	128
Toward a New Protestant Unity.	134
CONCLUSION.	144
SUMMARY	146
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	149

INTRODUCTION

The Colombian Protestant church is caught in the midst of a social revolution that is changing the history of the nation. The rapid social changes transpiring in Colombia today call into serious question the mission strategies used by the Protestant churches. A new mission strategy is essential in the light of several revolutionary happenings in the nation.

First, Colombia is experiencing an unparalleled population explosion. Colombia's demographic growth is 3.2 percent per annum.¹ Second, there is a rapidly increasing urban population with experts predicting that during the 1970's the majority of Colombians will live in urban centers. Third, urbanization has destroyed the traditional class structure that has existed since colonial times and new social stratification is emerging in the form of the urban middle strata. Despite opinions to the contrary regarding the existence of the new strata, recent studies by Robert Dix verify the fact that "there is a meaningful middle class in Colombia."² Fourth, in this climate of change Protestant Christianity is growing numerically at an unprecedented rate. Colombia's present communicant membership is almost 91,000,³ with the greatest percentage of growth occurring since 1960.

¹The Colombian Information Service, "Colombia--Basic Data & Economic Indicators," Colombia Today, IV:3 (March 1969), 6.

²Robert H. Dix, Colombia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 55.

³James E. Goff, "Census of Protestant Church Members in Colombia: 1969" (Bogotá: Office of Information and Public Relations, April 1969), p. 1.

Between 1960-67 Colombia's annual church growth rate was 12.0 percent.⁴

Caught in the midst of a society in rapid transition and revolution, the Colombian Protestant churches are experiencing great difficulty in communicating a Christian message that is relevant to the contemporary situation. However, the population explosion, the urban revolution, the emergence of the new middle strata, and the potential for continued church growth, demand the immediate attention of the Protestant churches' leadership to respond creatively to the new situation. The decade of the 1970's calls for Colombian Evangelicals to establish new priorities in evangelism, to open new frontiers for witness and service, and to develop and deploy a new mission strategy geared to the times. Failure by Protestants to respond to what is happening in Colombia today might well result in a fight for survival rather than in beginning a new reformation for the church's total mission.

A. PURPOSE OF STUDY

When the church discovers itself in a changing social context, it is essential to examine the situation, redefine priorities, and explore new mission strategies. A poignant remark made by Arthur Glasser accurately reflects this basic need:

...a tragic need exists to rethink missionary strategy. The overall picture is one of imbalance. Priorities have been uncritically adopted, based on sentiment, nineteenth century pater-

⁴William R. Read, Victor M. Monterroso, and Harmon A. Johnson, Latin American Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 49.

nalism, unbalanced promotional pressure, distorted views of Scripture, the hunger for quick, easy successes, and abysmal indifference to today's world situation.⁵

A large majority of Colombian churches are deeply entrenched with programs and personnel in small towns and rural villages or in massive institutional projects. While Protestant churches exist in all the cities in Colombia, there remains an inflexibility to respond to the rapidly changing contemporary situation with an effective mission strategy. Ineffective mission strategy is often the direct result of rigid attitudes, lack of sociological knowledge, inability to restructure programs, and the refusal to change to a strategy designed to reach a more specific and selective strata of society.

Therefore, the fundamental purpose of the study is to alert Protestant leadership to the present urban situation and suggest a new mission strategy designed to reach the person located in the urban middle strata with Christian-Protestant faith and life. Some Protestant churches need to consider moving toward the development and deployment of a situational mission strategy in order to witness more effectively, evangelize, and minister to these new strata in urban Colombian society.

B. METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The purpose of the thesis will be developed in seven chapters. Chapter one outlines in cursory fashion the religious and cultural background of Colombia. The advent and influence of Roman Catholicism is briefly traced. Protestantism's early struggles, darkest hours,

⁵Arthur Glasser, "Current Strategy in Missions," HIS, XXII:1 (October 1961), 10.

rapid expansion, and distinctive contributions are included.

Chapter two will introduce the phenomenon of urbanization and describe its main causes and effects from a sociological perspective. The section on social stratification is intended to inform Protestant churches concerning the new urban society and its implications for the ministry and mission of the church.

The characteristics of the urban middle strata are presented in chapter three. An attempt is made to locate these groups within the social structure. Traditional and modern social values and aspirations will provide an understanding of the gestalt of the middle sector person.

Three current mission strategy models will be examined in chapter four. Included is an analysis of their basic theology, methodology, and limitations of these three models related to the urban middle strata.

Chapter five will introduce the three major loci of the situational mission strategy model aimed at the spiritual and social needs of the urban middle strata. This strategy will be sensitive to the prevailing social conditions and religious climate in Colombia. Several urban groups will be discussed as possible targets for the new strategy.

Chapter six deals with major theological priorities related to the situational strategy model. The central focus of the Christian message, the importance of the church as community, and the meaning of the church's mission will illustrate the theological implications of making the strategy operational.

Chapter seven will emphasize the need for a flexible methodology which moves beyond conventional church patterns. The situational

strategy proposes that present ecclesiastical structures be altered and new forms geared to the needs of persons in the middle social strata.

The primary sources used in this study comprise a wide range of books, periodicals, and unpublished materials. Through personal contact and correspondence with key Latin American church leaders and missionaries, additional data and recent studies were made available. The writer has taken the liberty to draw from six years of experience-exposure involvement in Bogotá, Colombia as an overseas worker.

C. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For clarity several terms are defined within the Latin American context.

Mission Strategy. Mission strategy refers to a method or methods utilized by the Christian church to communicate the Gospel effectively. This will result in winning new followers to Christ, in developing new churches with responsible participation by their members, in extending the church's witness, ministry, and service in society. It means living out the way of Christian discipleship both personally and corporately in the community. Mission strategy methodology involves study of the contemporary socio-cultural situation, discernment of the strategic frontiers for evangelism and service, and careful placement of human and material resources to accomplish defined goals. Mission strategy is the appropriation of methods designed to make the church's total witness relevant to meet physical, social and spiritual needs.

Urban and Urbanization. The term "urban" is defined as an area

of population concentration, and a human and economic activities center located in a geographic focal point. An urban or urbanized area is understood to mean the city itself, plus the contiguous built-up area adjoining or surrounding its peripheries. United Nations demographers arbitrarily define an urban area as a concentration of population exceeding twenty thousand people.⁶ Urbanization is descriptive of the total process of population growth and demographic concentration in a geographical area in relation to the total population of a territory.⁷

Middle Strata. The word "strata" is used in a sociological sense to indicate a sector of society without definitive structural boundaries. The expression "middle strata" is employed to convey the idea of a social class in Colombia not paralleling a Western European or North American criteria of middle class. The majority of Latin Americanists refuse to use the term "middle class" for two primary reasons: first, it conveys an essentially economic connotation not used as a class criteria in Colombia, and second, there appears an apparent lack of class-consciousness among the Colombian middle strata.⁸ Therefore, the writer deliberately chooses the term "middle strata," a

⁶Medina J. Echavarría and Philip M. Hauser, "'Rapporteurs' Report," in Philip M. Hauser, (ed.) Urbanization in Latin America (New York: International Documents Service, 1961), p. 20.

⁷Jaime Dorselaer and Alfonso Gregory, La Urbanización en América Latina (Urbanization in Latin America), (Bogotá: Centro Internacional de Investigaciones Sociales de FERES, 1962), I, 11.

⁸John J. Johnson, "The Political Role of the Latin-American Middle Sectors," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCXXXIV (March 1961), 21.

term supported by James Payne, a prominent student of Colombian society.

Because there appears to be no felt sentiment of class-consciousness in Colombia, I conclude that it is unprofitable and misleading to speak of "classes." For purposes of identifying approximate sections of a smoothly rising stratification curve, the neutral term "strata" is a convenient way to avoid the misleading connotations of "class."⁹

Evangelicals and Evangelical Church. Protestants throughout Latin America are commonly known and referred to as "Evangelicals." In Colombia the term "Evangelical" refers to all Protestants regardless of denominational differences or theological distinctions. Evangelical churches indicate all local Protestant churches whereas the Evangelical church implies the corporate Protestant body of churches.

D. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Several limitations will narrow the thesis and give it manageable boundaries. First, it is not written from the standpoint of a foreign mission board, a sending agency, commission or society. The mission strategy supported by the writer is suggestive in nature and is not to be imposed upon the Evangelical church of Colombia by missionaries.

Second, the mission strategy for the urban middle strata will not be developed in detailed form. It is presented in skeletal form for further development by Evangelical leadership in Colombia. The writer's purpose is to indicate a direction, to point toward a new possibility, to advance some clues, but not to submit a blueprint.

⁹James Payne, Patterns of Conflict in Colombia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 45.

Third, there is no attempt to reconcile the current controversy over the nature of the mission of the Christian church. Colombian Evangelicals have little concern for debate concerning the question whether the church is mission, is in mission, or has a mission.

Finally, the writer recognizes the human limitations involved in developing a mission strategy, but does not desire to disregard the spiritual dynamic although the primary thrust of the thesis will deal with human factors related to mission strategy. The writer agrees with Eugene Nida who affirms:

A study of the human elements in the divine-human drama of God's role in human history does not deny God's part; it only helps one to appreciate better the way God has chosen to work within the context of human life....¹⁰

¹⁰Eugene A. Nida, "The Relationship of Social Structure to the Problems of Evangelism in Latin America," in William A. Smalley (ed.), Readings in Missionary Anthropology (Tarrytown, New York: Practical Anthropology, 1967), p. 51.

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF COLOMBIA

A brief consideration of Colombia's religious history and cultural heritage in the context of the general history of Latin America gives background and perspective from which to view the rapid social, cultural, and religious developments of the present.

A. PRE-COLUMBIAN RELIGION AND CULTURE

When the Spanish conquerors arrived in the New World, they discovered several highly complex Indian cultures; chief among them were the Incas, Mayas, and the Aztecs. These advanced civilizations were organized by their religious leaders who also constituted the civil authority. Prior to the Conquest, Colombia was a land inhabited by the Muisca people, members of the Chibcha Indian nation. The Chibchas did not possess a civilization comparable with the Incas, Mayas, or Aztecs. They were agriculturalists by vocation, although tilling the soil was accomplished without the aid of domesticated animals or mechanical devices. W. O. Galbraith points out that the Chibchas demonstrated some skill in weaving and were competent potters, but had not achieved the use of the wheel or the arch before the arrival of the Spaniards.¹

The life of the indigenous Indian people in the pre-Columbian era was one in which individuals were subjected to the community and

¹W. O. Galbraith, Colombia, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 8.

controlled by a priestly caste. Religion was one of the most important and deep-seated features of these Indian cultures. Religion among the Chibchas was polytheistic and animistic. They worshipped a variety of gods, including the sun and moon.² Civil authority seemed to be in the hands of the caciques (chiefs), who were also their religious leaders. The peace-loving Chibcha nation offered little resistance during the period of the Conquest. This religio-cultural background of the more advanced Latin American Indian civilizations became fertile soil for planting the seeds of the Roman Catholic faith.

B. THE ADVENT OF SPANISH ROMAN CATHOLICISM

It is not pre-Columbian Indian religion or culture that influences contemporary Colombia, but rather Spanish Catholicism which has left its indelible mark on the history and life of the nation. The Spanish discoverers were the conquistadores, the Christianizers, and the colonizers of Colombia.

1. Conquistadores. Colombia was discovered in 1500 on Columbus' second voyage to the New World by Alonso de Lugo, who became the first Spaniard to set foot on what is now Colombian soil. Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada, explored the Magdalena River, conquered the Chibchas, and founded the town of Santa Fe which was renamed Bogotá, the present capitol city.³

²Kathleen Romoli, Colombia (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1941), pp. 60-1.

³Pat M. Holt, Colombia Today--And Tomorrow (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 20.

The Spanish conquistadores came to the New World with a thirst for power and a craving for gold. From Spain they brought the institutions, culture, language, and community patterns which were imposed upon the indigenous peoples by the power of the sword. Wielding the yardstick of European anthropology, the conquistadores, at first, regarded the Indians as barbarian pagans to be treated as men without souls, but later as objects for Christianization.

2. Christianizers. Once the initial conquest of the Indians was completed, the Spanish conquerors became their Christianizers. The sword and cross entered partnership, the throne and altar became identical, and the glory of Spain and the Roman Catholic church were one. Among the conquistadores there was evident a sense of destiny and mission for it seemed that Spain was the chosen vessel of God to expand the boundaries of Christendom.⁴

Rome gave the Catholic monarchs of Spain the right and duty to evangelize the indigenous pagans. The Indians were forced into Christian baptism en masse, coerced to recognize the Pope as head of the church, and made to accept the king of Spain as their sovereign ruler.⁵ Depaganization was accomplished through memorizing the catechism, the creeds, and prayers. Spanish Christianization permitted Indian gods to be substituted for Catholic saints, and Catholic rituals were accommodated to Indian religious practices. The process resulted in a syn-

⁴W. Stanley Rycroft, Religion and Faith in Latin America (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 84.

⁵Ibid., p. 105.

cretized Christianity which some anthropologists term "Christo-Paganism."⁶

3. Colonizers. Colony-type settlements in Colombia came into existence by the royal decree of Charles V of Spain. The nation was colonized under the complete domination of Spain who gave her an organized society, a legal system, and an established church. It is no exaggeration when Alexander Allan declares: "For nearly 300 years...from 1538 onwards, the colonial policy of Spain and the ecclesiastical power of Rome, exercised almost undisputed sway in Colombia...."⁷

With assistance from missionary priests, the colonizers continued the mass Christianization of the Indians, established Spanish social patterns and cultural values, and introduced political and religious paternalism. Of all colonial institutions, it was and continues to be the Roman Catholic Church which embodies the traditional values of Colombian society. The present influence of colonial-type Catholicism is evident from Robert Dix's statement: "...the Church is the institution which par excellence embodies the traditional values of Colombian society and with which is identified the essence of being Colombian."⁸

Colombia was liberated from Spanish rule in 1819 by Simón Bolívar in the famous Battle of Boyacá. While liberation brought polit-

⁶William L. Wonderly, "The Indigenous Background of Religion in Latin America," Practical Anthropology, XIV:6 (November-December 1967), 241-2.

⁷Alexander M. Allan, "Before the Mast and Behind the Pulpit," (New York: United Presbyterian Mission Library, June 1968), p. 114.

⁸Robert H. Dix, Colombia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 312.

ical independence from Spain, Colombia remains under Spanish socio-cultural influence and under the religious impact of Roman Catholicism.

C. THE ENTRANCE AND EMERGENCE OF PROTESTANTISM

The history of Protestantism in Colombia is marked by struggle, opposition, violence, and rapid growth.

1. Early Beginnings. Early Protestant beginnings are associated with the British and Foreign Bible Societies who, through their agent, James Thomson, entered Colombia selling Bibles around 1822. He organized an indigenous Bible Society in Bogotá with the support of several high-ranking government officials. The Society was active in vending Bibles until pressure from the Roman Church curtailed distribution.⁹

During the early 1850's, an Englishman and Colombia's Minister of War, Colonel James Fraser, requested that the Presbyterian Church of Scotland send missionary pastors. Since the Scots were unable to respond to his call, Fraser made an identical request to the Presbyterian Church in America. As a result, Henry Barrington Pratt was sent to Colombia in 1856 and began the first Protestant mission work in Bogotá. Records show that Pratt held the first Evangelical worship service in a Bogotá hotel with twelve persons present, two of whom were Colombian.¹⁰

Additional Presbyterian missionaries joined Pratt and together they struggled to gain a foothold for Protestantism. Among the major

⁹Allan, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁰Allen D. Clark, "Tentative History of the Colombia Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A." (New York: United Presbyterian Mission Library), p. 13.

difficulties were the opposition of the Catholic clergy, inadequate support from the home churches, and lack of transportation and communication facilities in the country. By 1923 there were thirty Presbyterian missionaries and six other Protestant workers in Colombia.

Most other Protestant denominational and independent mission groups entered the country after 1930. In 1930 a liberal government under the leadership of Enrique Olaya Herrera, came to power in Colombia and attempted to guarantee complete religious liberty under the Constitution. From that year until the close of World War II, there was generally a conducive climate for the advancement of Protestant mission efforts. The years 1930 to 1945 were a time of consolidation of the work in which comity arrangements and cooperative agreements were coordinated among the members of the Evangelical community.

2. Post-World War II to Present. The significant emergence of Evangelical Christianity began after World War II and continues to the present. This period is marked by persecution followed by unprecedented growth.

In 1948 a popular Liberal Party leader, Jorge Gaitán, was assassinated in downtown Bogotá. This tragic event touched off a ten year period of history known as La Violencia (The Violence). The Conservative Party gained power and began a relentless attack on its political enemies which resulted in protracted guerrilla warfare, primarily in the rural mountainous areas. Religious persecution of Protestants was initiated under the presidency of Ospina Pérez the same year. In spite of complex factors, James Goff believes the basic cause for Protestant per-

secution in Colombia "developed out of a Church-State relationship in which the purposes of the Roman Catholic Church and the policies of the Conservative Party were closely identified."¹¹ The persecution took the form of destroying and damaging church facilities, killing or injuring individuals, forceably closing churches and schools, interrupting Evangelical services, imprisoning pastors and church members, and defamation and harrassment by civil and Catholic authorities.

Two agreements between the Holy See and Colombia which were enforced during this period added to the intensity of the persecution. The Concordat of 1887 and the Treaty on Missions of 1902 gave the Catholic Church complete jurisdiction over education, baptisms, marriages, cemeteries, and granted them monopolistic control over two-thirds of the Republic's territory. At present the constitutionality of these agreements is being debated by the Colombian Congress.

The persecution officially ended in 1958 with a political settlement between the warring Conservative and Liberal Parties. For many younger Colombian Protestants and Catholics who cannot comprehend any rationale for the persecution, this statement by Emilio Willems is helpful:

One ought to bear in mind that Latin American society had absorbed Roman Catholicism so thoroughly that to many it had acquired a symbolic meaning above and beyond its religious content. This explains the somewhat surprising fact that many Latin Ameri-

¹¹James E. Goff, "The Persecution of Protestant Christians in Colombia, 1948 to 1958, With An Investigation of Its Background and Causes," (San Anselmo, California: San Francisco Theological Seminary, April 1965), 23.

cans who were nominal Catholics at best arose in arms against the "Protestant peril" in defense of religious unity, which to many had become the equivalent of cultural unity.¹²

The recent growth and development of the Evangelical church can only be understood in the light of this violent period of history. The Violence dislocated thousands of people, broke traditional family ties, accelerated migration from rural areas to the cities, and altered customs and cultural values which affected the entire social fabric of the nation. Post-Violence developments such as urbanization and industrialization tended to create a new responsiveness to the Evangelical church and faith. In 1960 the Protestant surge began with a registered communicant membership of 33,000. A 1969 census shows a baptized membership of 90,573 and a constituency of sympathizers, regular attenders, and supporters estimated at 271,719 persons.¹³ Since 1960 Colombia boasts an annual Protestant growth rate of 12 percent surpassed only by Venezuela and Ecuador.¹⁴ In addition to the socio-political reasons already mentioned, the rapid aggrandizement of the Evangelical church reflects an exercising of constitutional religious liberties. These liberties now permit Protestants to conduct open-air evangelistic services, freedom to distribute literature and Bibles, and access to the press and radio. The new spirit of tolerance demonstrated by the

¹²Emilio Willems, Followers of the New Faith (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967), p. 58.

¹³James E. Goff, "Census of Protestant Church Members in Colombia: 1969," (Bogotá: Office of Information and Public Relations, April 1969), p. 1.

¹⁴William R. Read, Victor M. Monterroso, and Harmon A. Johnson, Latin American Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 49.

Colombian Catholic Church is also a very significant factor.

Most Evangelical groups report steady numerical increase with the Pentecostal churches multiplying at phenomenal proportions. Surveys indicate that the major growth is occurring in urban areas. There is no information available which identifies the social strata from which the church gains members. James Goff, a recognized authority of Colombian Protestantism, concludes that overall growth is coming from the low and lower middle classes and that Pentecostal increases come from primarily the urban lower class.¹⁵ Dayton Roberts, a Latin mis-
siologist, agrees stating: "It's in the lower strata of society that the Christian message is most readily heeded and the Evangelical church has shown most growth and vitality."¹⁶

The Protestant church is not officially recognized by civil or religious authorities, but its presence is evident in that it survived persecution, continues to grow rapidly, and has made several distinctive contributions in the life of the nation.

3. Distinctive Protestant Contributions. The first contribution was the introduction of the Bible. Bible distribution was forbidden in the colonies by decree of the Pope and the king. For almost three centuries following Spain's discovery of the New World, the Bible was virtually unknown in Latin America. Through efforts of the British, American, and Foreign Bible Societies, the Christian Scriptures were brought

¹⁵James E. Goff, "Letter to Howard Habegger," (Bogotá: May 18, 1969), p. 1.

¹⁶W. Dayton Roberts, "Witnessing 'Up,'" HIS, XXIII:9 (June 1963), 11.

to the attention of the Colombian peoples.

Bible selling preceded the advent of Colombian Protestantism. Spanish New Testaments were printed in Bogotá in 1837 and five thousand complete Bibles were published in 1857.¹⁷ At the turn of the century Colombian civil strife caused the Bible Society to move its headquarters to Peru. At present the Colombian Bible Society, in cooperation with Evangelical churches, continues active Bible selling and distribution efforts throughout the country. The Scriptures placed in the hands of the Colombian readers played an important role in establishing the Protestant church. It also awakened a new religious concern and tended to neutralize the authoritarian voice of Roman Catholic tradition.

A second contribution of import has been the influence of private Protestant education. As early as 1862 William MacLaren suggested a mission strategy beyond preaching and Bible selling. In a letter to his mission board in New York he wrote: "Now to accomplish our purpose, we must depend not on conversion and Bible circulation alone, but upon schools, which constitute the best mode of missionary work in this country."¹⁸

Through boarding schools and secondary academies, Protestant education has been instrumental in removing prejudices against Evangelicals. It alerted people to the opportunities of a changing culture and prepared them for specialized roles in a developing urban-

¹⁷Clark, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 19.

industrial society. One of the country's outstanding Protestant educators, Héctor Valencia, notes additional contributions of Evangelical education: "...secondary academies, usually called Colegios Americanos, have exerted a strong liberalizing influence on the country and have contributed in noteworthy fashion in the preparation of such Christian leadership as the country now enjoys."¹⁹

These colegios, located in the cities, were oriented toward the education of urban lower middle and middle classes. They gave a new impulse to liberal education for women, introduced new pedagogical methods, initiated co-education on a high school level, and began an inter-scholastic sports program.²⁰

Evangelical schools also accelerated upward social mobility, not only for Protestants but for the population at large regardless of religious persuasion. Although only a fraction of the population has received an education in these institutions, they became a model for many public educational systems.

Another additional impact is in the area of basic Christian faith and life. Evangelicals injected two features into religious life which Latin Roman Catholicism has lacked: an inward spiritual experience and outward ethical and moral expression. John Mackay, famed missionary leader, describes the Christ brought to Latin America as an

¹⁹Héctor G. Valencia, "Progress Under Persecution," Christianity Today, VII:21 (July 19, 1963), 14.

²⁰Orlando Fals-Borda, "Bases For a Sociological Interpretation of Education in Colombia," in A. Curtis Wilgus (ed.), The Caribbean (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), p. 197.

admixture of African mysticism and Spanish aestheticism. He believes that the Christ of transforming and redeeming power did not reach the shores of the New World with the Spanish discoverers.²¹ The Evangelical message has basically centered on the Christ of love and power who is known through personal spiritual experience. The main biblical motifs evident in the Protestant message are "God is love" and "Christ is risen Lord."

Protestant faith carries social and ethical implications for life. Colombian Evangelicals acquired a reputation for being dependable, honest, industrious, and individuals with high moral and ethical standards. Personal piety expressed in outward ethical behavior tends to distinguish Protestants from most Catholics. These noted differences created the beginnings of a religious pluralism which threatens the traditional socio-religious structure. For this reason, it has been alleged that Protestantism is not congenial nor compatible with the Colombian spirit. This charge is rejected by most nationals, who recognize that the distinct contributions of Protestants have produced a liberalizing effect in terms of human liberty and freedom of conscience which is the essence of the Latin spirit.

In summary, the Spanish conquerors found several highly developed civilizations in the pre-Columbian New World. These civilizations were forceably subdued and destroyed by the imposition of a new language, a new culture, and a new religion brought from Spain. Under the

²¹John A. Mackay, The Other Spanish Christ (New York: Macmillan, 1932), p. 95-8.

edict of the king of Spain and the blessing of the Pope in Rome, the conquerors also became the Christianizers of the Indians, whom they often baptized en masse into the Roman Catholic faith and church. The conquest, Christianization, and colonization of Latin America has shaped its thought and life. Colombia's social structures, cultural heritage, and religious institutions have their origin in Spain.

Perhaps Colombia represents the most difficult country in Latin America for the beginning of Protestant mission endeavors. The British and Foreign Bible Societies are credited with the earliest efforts at introducing a non-Roman Catholic faith into Colombia. A few heroic Presbyterian missionaries, under almost constant harrassment and pressure, were able to gain a foothold in a few Colombian cities from the turn of the century through 1930. The Concordat and Treaty on Missions added to the tensions between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant community. A period known as The Violence marks a decade of persecution and intense struggle through which Protestant Christians were able to survive. Despite small and difficult beginnings, the Protestant minority has made an impact on the life of the Colombian nation through the introduction of the Scriptures, the establishment of liberal elementary and secondary educational institutions, and the presentation of an Evangelical message which has emphasized the personal, moral, and ethical dimensions of the faith.

This historic religio-cultural background places contemporary sociological events in a broad context from which to gain perspective of the present situation. Currently the urban areas of Colombia are the main arena in which the social, cultural, and religious changes are

centered. These changes are basically a result of urbanization, which creates new socio-cultural patterns and is the major factor in the reshaping the life of the nation. The city is the locus in which there is emerging a new social stratification creating profound effects on personal, family, and community life. An awareness and understanding of the phenomenon of urbanization is vital in order to develop a mission strategy geared for middle strata urbanites in Colombia.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTEMPORARY URBAN SITUATION

A. THE PHENOMENON OF URBANIZATION

The most significant aspect of the present social revolution and the major force for change in Colombia is urbanization. Without an accurate understanding and analysis of the dynamics of this contemporary phenomenon, re-thinking current mission strategies or development of a new urban strategy is impossible.

As Latin America enters the decade of the 1970's she possesses twenty-four cities of more than one-half million inhabitants. Colombia has four cities in this category: Bogotá (2,200,000), Medellín (970,000), Cali (815,000), and Barranquilla (590,000). Six additional urban centers (Cartagena, Bucaramanga, Manizales, Pereira, Cúcuta, and Ibagué) have populations ranging from 150 to 300 thousand.¹ Using the criteria of twenty thousand as a demographic definition of a city, the Economic Commission for Latin America estimates that nearly 40 percent of all Colombians now live in cities and by 1975, 61 percent will reside in cities. A more recent study indicates that Colombia's urban rate of growth is 5.5 percent per year, but 7 percent in the larger cities.² These impressive statistics alone do not provide the necessary insight

¹The Colombian Information Service, "Colombia--Basic Data & Economic Indicators," Colombia Today, IV:3 (March 1969), 6.

²George Jackson Eder, "Urban Concentration, Agriculture, and Agrarian Reform," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCLX (July 1965), 31.

for mission strategists to comprehend the situation but they strongly suggest that urban areas provide the crucial arena for Protestant church efforts in evangelism and ministry.

B. THE REASONS FOR URBANIZATION

1. Rapid Population Growth. Reasons for urbanization in Colombia are complex. Most sociologists conclude that the rapid rate of total population growth and internal migration are the two primary causes. Because of marked reduction in infant mortality, increased medical services, and new public health measures, demographic growth continues an upward spiral. One competent observer, Henry Jones, summarized this fact by stating that "The rate of urbanization...is a function, in large measure, of the exceedingly rapid rate of total population growth, a rate well above the world average."³

2. Internal Migration. Internal migration according to many experts is the chief cause of accelerated urbanization. Colombians are deserting the rural areas and moving to the city in unprecedented proportions. Internal migration accounts for one-half to two-thirds of rapid urban growth. Negatively, studies prove that urbanization is independent of industrialization and is not the principal component behind the rural to urban migration.⁴ Positively, urban growth is attri-

³Henry D. Jones, "Christian Responsibility in Latin America's Industrial Society," (New York: Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, 1959), p. 5.

⁴Carlos M. Sabanes, "Urbanization in Latin America," International Review of Missions, LV:219 (July 1966), 311.

buted to economic push factors from the rural countryside and socio-economic pull factors from the cities.

Observers disagree which element is most important: the magnetic pull of the cities or the poverty push from the rural areas. Eder is convinced that the rural flight is a direct result of economic push forces such as poverty, inflation, shortage of land, and lack of price controls on agricultural commodities.⁵ In contrast the sociologist, Rex Hopper, believes that Colombians migrate not because they are forced, but rather by free choice they reject ruralism for urbanism because the lure of better educational, occupational, and social opportunities is strong.⁶ It seems apparent that both push and pull factors are interrelated. Out-migration from rural areas reflects the imbalance in agrarian economy; whereas the opportunities for socio-economic betterment is the basic attraction provided by urban society.

A decade of civil strife, rural warfare, and the constant threat of violence forced many Colombian families into the security of the cities. This forced migration in several regions of the nation propelled rapid urbanization in a comparatively short span of time. Ibagué, located in the center of Tolima state, is an example of a small rural community that mushroomed into a city of over 100,000 during the period of The Violence. While civil warfare is not the main reason for the present urbanization revolution, it was a contributing factor con-

⁵Eder, op. cit., p. 31.

⁶Rex Hopper, "Research on Latin America in Sociology," in Charles Wagley (ed.), Social Science Research on Latin America (New York: Colombia University Press, 1964), p. 264.

comitant with the push-pull causes during the 1950's.

The sector of rural population migrating to urban areas seems to be a group of selective individuals. From a current study of internal migration, Paul Schultz states:

...particular groups may be more susceptible to migration opportunities: The young, who are still relatively unencumbered and look forward to many rewarding years in a new location; the better educated, who are better equipped to evaluate the opportunities and uncertainties abroad; and the women, who often have more to gain from leaving traditional rural society and accepting the responsibilities of progressive urban society.⁷

Youth, the educated, and women become key targets in a consideration of a relevant urban mission strategy.

C. THE EFFECTS OF URBANIZATION

More vital than facts and reasons behind urbanization are the effects of this process in the re-socialization of the Colombian urbanite. Protestant church leaders should be conscious of problems created by urbanization on human life and new possibilities it offers for Christian mission. The church that is aware of its effects on the personal, family, and community life of an individual will want to develop a mission strategy germane to his spiritual and social needs. The rapid transition from a feudalistic agrarian society to a modern urban industrial society results in a series of complex economic problems and creates a new socio-cultural portrait.

⁷Paul T. Schultz, "Internal Migration in Colombia: A Quantitative Analysis," (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, August 1968), p. 13.

1. Socio-Economic Problems. The poor, uneducated, and unskilled rural peasant who migrates to the Colombian cities immediately creates acute socio-economic problems. The cities are overrun with jobless peasants who live in parasitic fashion in chaotic inhuman conditions. The construction of shanty towns within the city or on the outskirts results in demoralizing circumstances.⁸ Urban peasants generally attempt to retain their traditional rural social values and cultural patterns which tend to alienate them from urban society.

Contemporary urbanization has fundamental effects on the emerging middle strata. These strata, because of more education and some specialized skills, are able to adjust more quickly to the demands of urban living. The middle strata possess higher aspirations for a better life, and therefore they make economic demands of city and national governments for improved public services and facilities. Under pressure to provide urban housing, rapid transit, health and welfare institutions, and over-populated cities verge on economic disaster. The urban middle person desires more employment opportunities which society cannot always provide because of slow technological and industrial development.

2. New Socio-Cultural Portrait. Urbanization exercises a great influence on human personality development in relation to individual, family, and community life. Urban culture gives birth to social consequences for all sectors of society. Considerable inner tension is

⁸W. Stanley Rycroft and Myrtle M. Clemmer, A Study of Urbanization in Latin America (New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1963), p. 45.

caused when new behavioral patterns replace traditional rural codes of conduct and current urban morality is substituted for rural moral and ethical standards. Medina Echavarría and Philip Hauser write concerning this rural-urban struggle: "The contrasts between the rural and urban mentality is the source of virtually all the difficulties attendant upon the urbanization process, especially when this takes place too rapidly."⁹ In urban society there is an absence of accepted norms of conduct which produces a radar-type personality which is controlled by a multitude of outside stimuli. Such a person is caught between the internalization of prescribed traditional forms of behavior and the new pull of externalized influences of a society in rapid transition.¹⁰

Urban society has its most profound effect on the Colombian family structure. The traditional Latin family is characterized by large extended family relationships including parents, children, aunts and uncles, cousins, grandparents, and godparents. Rural family structure is being rapidly supplanted with the small urban nuclear family which includes only parents and their unmarried children. This shift gradually erodes old patterns of discipline and authority. Ricardo Chartier, an urban specialist in Latin America, sees a definite "tendency toward greater equalitarianism...less authoritarianism in relationships between parents and children in general and in particular be-

⁹Medina J. Echavarría and Philip M. Hauser, "Rapporteurs' Report," in Philip Hauser (ed.), Urbanization in Latin America (New York: International Documents Service, 1961), p. 25.

¹⁰Ricardo A. Chartier, "El Desafío Urbano" ("The Urban Challenge") (Buenos Aires: Methopress, 1965), pp. 21-2.

tween husband and wife, especially in the 'middle sectors.'¹¹ Movement toward equality allows middle strata Colombian wives and children more independence and social flexibility and less family discipline and control.

As the role of the extended family is decreased, the functions of secondary groups and multiple associations are increased. Colombian cities produce a mosaic of communities, the beginnings of a pluralistic society in which there is opportunity to belong to a multiplicity of communities. Meryl Ruoss believes that middle strata people are particularly open to broad social and cultural associations. They live in one geographic barrio (sector) of the city, are members of occupational and professional groups in another sector, socialize in recreational and cultural interest groups in another, and probably associate with different people in their religious community.¹² Secondary groups tend to fragment community life, resulting in social marginality and cultural dislocation from which emerges a type of socio-cultural schizophrenia.

In the new and impersonal atmosphere of urban life the Protestant church must develop a mission strategy geared to create a mutually beneficial social group to help meet the middle urbanite's basic need for an integrative community of friendship and brotherhood. The middle strata person suffering from a sense of social dislocation looks for a new face-to-face community in the midst of multiplicity of associations

¹¹Ibid., p. 19.

¹²Meryl Ruoss, "New Factors in the Expanding Urban Situation" (New York: Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, 1960), p. 6.

surrounding him as a result of modern urbanization.

3. New Social Stratification. Modern urbanization has forced apart the traditional two-caste system which has dominated Colombia since colonial rule. The social distinction of longest standing for Colombians has been between the landowning aristocracy, the elites, and the remainder of the population, the peasants.

The peasants, referred to as los pobres (the poor ones) or euphemistically as the "popular" classes, are Colombia's powerless people representing about two-thirds of society in which they neither possess property nor prestige. Poverty-stricken, often disease-ridden, and uneducated, the rural or urban peasants are those who cook, clean, bow and scrape, and generally perform the hard, menial tasks in society.¹³ The urban peasantry often clings to its rural outlook and values and tends to use urban institutions as a social shock absorber to cope with the perplexities of city life.

The tradition of the elites or upper caste is deeply imbedded in Colombia's colonial-feudal social structure. Elites take their place of economic power and social prestige by an aristocratic birth-right. Traditionally, the elites have held a monopoly on wealth, politics, and land which casts them in the role of society's master manipulators. The masses refer to them as la oligarquía (the oligarchy). Robert Dix feels this title is justifiable "to the extent that the Colombian elite is substantially a self-perpetuating minority in control

¹³Vernon Lee Fluharty, Dance of the Millions (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1957), p. 43.

of the key power resources of the society without any real accountability to the rest of the community."¹⁴ They historically represented only three to five percent of the total population and are the patrones (protector-bosses) of Colombian society.

The traditional two-caste system is no longer valid in Colombia because urbanization and its concurrent phenomenon, industrialization, have created a fundamental realignment in the social structure. The city provides the dynamic which has proven particularly destructive to the old social order of pre-World War II. After careful study Luis Ratinoff, a leading Latin Americanist, made this statement:

The rapid growth of cities has created a new type of social structure in Latin America...which can only be interpreted by reference to the changes that have taken place since 1945. In all Latin American countries where urbanization has reached a significant state of development, the middle classes have now become a decisive force in the structure of power.¹⁵

Colombia's traditional bifurcated class structure has been broken and no longer remains an accurate portrayal of the present reality. T. Lynn Smith, a lifetime scholar of Colombian social stratification, believes that the middle strata are a fact of the new social structure in Colombia. He concludes that:

...largely because of the rapid growth of cities...Colombia's traditional two-class system is undergoing fundamental changes. There actually seems to be emerging a considerable number of middle-class people to fill the great void that long separated those of upper-class lineage from the huge mass of lower-class persons who constituted the bulk of the population. To the ex-

¹⁴Robert H. Dix, Colombia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 43.

¹⁵Luis Ratinoff, "The New Urban Groups: The Middle Classes," in Seymour Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari (eds.), Elites in Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 61.

tent that the development process actually is carried on, the traditional two-class system must be modified to include a large and strong middle-class layer.¹⁶

There is also evidence that rapid urban growth has not only created the new middle strata, but also an urban proletariat which cannot be identified with the peasant stratum. Urban centers with their growing social, cultural, and economic requirements provide a favorable climate in which the new social strata flourish. While it is true that the new strata do not form a compact or consolidated layer of society, their emergence and existence cannot be denied. The contemporary stratification resulting from urbanization is a sociological reality.

This chapter has revealed that urbanization is a primary force for rapid social change in Colombia. The rapidity of these changes is especially acute in the several large urban centers of the Republic. The general population explosion and increasing internal migration from rural to urban areas account for the phenomenon of urbanization. This phenomenon has far-reaching effects on the entire structure of society and creates a series of complex social, economic, and political problems which call for concrete solutions. Urbanization is particularly destructive to traditional Latin American social structures which have been of agrarian orientation. Rural-type family and community life are primary targets of these destructive social forces. The modern Colombian urbanite is undergoing the process of re-socialization in which old patterns of behavior are being discarded and new styles of life are emerging. One of the most profound results of urbanization is the for-

¹⁶T. Lynn Smith, Colombia (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), p. 375.

mation of the newly located strata between the historic elite and the peasant social structure. Colombia's social structure has been forced apart by the rapid emergence and growth of this urban middle stratum and is re-shaping Colombian society.

The fact and effects of modern urbanization in Colombia warrant serious consideration by the Evangelical churches as a crucial area in which the church must act responsibly. That the majority of Colombians will reside in urban centers by 1975, that traditional family and community life are in rapid decay, that individuals are in a period of transition and dislocation, that the new social strata have emerged--these are today's realities to which the Protestant church must respond. The contemporary urban situation is a determinate factor in designing a relevant mission strategy to reach urbanites with the Christian faith and life. Knowledge of the city as a strategic locus, along with an understanding of the particular people residing in that location is essential in attempting to devise a new mission strategy. A mission strategy tailored for the urban middle strata, basically neglected by Protestants in Colombia, is the urgency of this decade. Mission strategists need to be conscious of the basic characteristics, sense of identity, social and cultural values, and present and future aspirations of the urban middle strata. The purpose of chapter three is to draw a sociological composite of these strata which will render valuable insights into the needs of the individual in the present urban society.

CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE URBAN MIDDLE STRATA

Many Colombian Protestants share a common fallacy which insists that all people, regardless of social stratification, have identical social and spiritual needs. This presupposition is indefensible in light of the distinctive characteristics existing between various sectors of modern urban society. A sense of location, identification, social values, and aspirations are determinant factors in searching for a mission strategy geared to meet the needs of particular people.

A. THE LOCATION OF THE URBAN MIDDLE STRATA

It is essential to locate accurately the group of people for which a mission strategy is designed. Latin Americanists are not in agreement regarding the exact location of the urban middle strata in the social spectrum. Recent observers, studying the Colombian situation, speak of two variant middle sectors--the traditional middle and the new middle.

A high percentage of the traditional middle are the sons and grandsons of elite families that once perched atop the social pyramid. According to T. Lynn Smith certain economic forces pushed this group down the social scale making it difficult for them to maintain an elite-style of life.¹ This middle group attempts to retain the elite frame

¹T. Lynn Smith, Colombia (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), p. 341.

of reference, emulates an elite mode of life, and is concerned with fachada (appearance) and high culture. It is further characterized by strong social control, support of the Catholic church, and social and political conservatism. The new mission strategy is not designed for this traditional middle sector of society, but for the new middle strata.

The new middle strata emerged in the cities through upward social mobility, a result of some rural migrants and those previously resident in the city who took advantage of educational and occupational opportunities provided by urbanization. Robert Dix distinguishes this social sector from the traditional middle by stating:

On the whole they tend to imitate elite preoccupations less; to be less concerned about fachada and culture and more with making money; to place less emphasis on social control and participate less in church activities; to have less scorn for work with one's hands; and to exhibit a degree of political nonconformity. Numerically the bulk of the Colombian middle class lies here.²

Another student of the new middle believes they are persons of modern temperament and relativistic ideas, willing to make compromises on social issues and ideologically committed to a limited secularism.³

Embracing a wide social span, these unconsolidated middle strata do not yet represent a compact layer in urban society because of a lack of class consciousness and an absence of a unified ideology. From a thin intermediate stratum they have grown in sufficient numbers to be located above the urban proletariat and below the traditional middle.

²Robert H. Dix, Colombia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 61.

³Kalman H. Silvert, "The University Student," in John J. Johnson (ed.), Continuity and Change in Latin America (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 206.

This urban middle person is the prime target for a new mission strategy.

B. THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE NEW URBAN MIDDLE STRATA

Analysis of the social spectrum will render a significant portrayal of the urban middle individual, lending valuable clues for developing a relevant mission strategy. No empirical statistics are available to measure the current numerical size of this growing minority; however, Dix estimates they comprise 15 to 20 percent of the Colombian population.⁴ On the basis of further research, one sociologist, Charles Wagley, concludes that the size of the middle strata corresponds "with the degree of urbanization, industrialization, ethnic and cultural homogeneity, literacy, and the demand for public services."⁵

In Colombia the racial identity most prevalent in the new middle is mestizo (part Spanish and part Indian). The mestizo resembles his Spanish father and Indian mother with a lean, light brown face which is the racial symbol of this sector of society. While racial purity in a genetic sense is not an important value, Walter Guzzardi affirms that "the mestizo is the middle class."⁶

The primary identity of the urban middle person is made by occupation and profession, not by income. They constitute a heterogeneous conglomerate of salaried and self-employed individuals. Some hold

⁴Dix, op. cit., p. 56.

⁵Charles Wagley, The Latin American Tradition (New York: Colombia University Press, 1968), p. 202.

⁶Walter Guzzardi, Jr., "The Crucial Middle Class," Fortune, LXV:2 (February 1962), 214.

white-collar jobs, although not the most lucrative or prestigious ones, such as: the lower echelons of government bureaucrats and clerks, sales and managerial personnel of small private firms, merchants, businessmen, and bank employees. Their professions include: lawyers, teachers, journalists, and doctors who do not possess the criteria for elite membership, technicians, dentists, pharmacists, engineers, nurses, photographers, hygienists and a host of similar professions requiring some skill or educational prerequisites.⁷ Others are small landowners, operators of small business establishments, artisans, social workers, and members of the communications media. A study by Dix indicates Colombia's middle strata have fewer entrepreneurial elements, but a higher percentage of white-collar employees and self-employed professionals than at a comparable state of middle class development in the United States or Western Europe.⁸ This vast array of occupations and professions demonstrates their breadth of involvement in the urban social fabric. On the basis of these vocations the urban middle man receives a middle level income and lives on a relatively fixed salary.

Educational achievements are another valid criteria to identify the urban middle person. Within this sector, education is an obsession and may range from a primary school certificate, a bachillerato (high school diploma), to a university degree. Aldo Solari maintains that education becomes a status symbol, almost a sine qua non condition for

⁷John P. Gillin, "Some Signposts for Policy," in Lyman Bryson (ed.), Social Change in Latin America Today (New York:Harper & Brothers, 1960), pp. 26-7.

⁸Dix, op. cit., p. 58.

retaining social standing and for future upward mobility aspirations.⁹ Middle strata parents favor expanded public education supported by governmental funds but the vast majority send their children to private schools, generally considered to offer superior education. Significantly almost four-fifths of the total student body attending National University in Bogotá in 1964 belonged to the middle strata. This fact accentuates the value placed on higher education.¹⁰ Because of access to education the middle strata are literate. They are the leading consumers of newspapers and books, are greatly influenced by the mass media, and are alert to national issues and aware of international events.

Evangelical mission strategists who hope to relate the Christian message and church's ministry to these particular Colombians need to consider their identifying characteristics. Recognition of their social values and aspirations will complete the group's personality profile and further aid church leaders in planning a strategy.

C. THE SOCIAL VALUES OF THE URBAN MIDDLE STRATA:

TRADITIONAL TOWARD TRANSITIONAL

Socialization is the process by which individuals are enculturated to function as members of society. The process involves know-

⁹Aldo Solari, "Secondary Education and Elite Development," in Seymour Martin Lipset and Aldo Solari (eds.), Elites in Latin America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 463, 465.

¹⁰Robert C. Williamson, "University Students in a World of Change: A Colombian Example," Sociology and Social Research, XLVIII:4 (July 1964), 399.

ledge, feelings, and a set of social values which are determinants of personal action and behavior.¹¹ The Colombian who belongs to the urban middle sector carries some traditional social values but is developing new ones which reflect a transitional quality.

Through the processes of urbanization, industrialization, and modernization the urban middle person is undergoing re-socialization as traditional values diminish in significance and new values increase in importance. Several social values attributed to these strata are not unique since middle sector people in Colombia are also typically Latin. However, even these values are in a state of modification. A perception of what is transpiring in the area of social values is of cardinal import for an effective Protestant mission strategy.

1. Personalism Preserved. Personalism is a prominent value in Latin American culture, prominent among lower classes, and also a strong characteristic of middle sectors. Personalism is defined in various ways: a reliance on personal relationships rather than formal or legal agreements; an emphasis on individual uniqueness, integrity, worth, and personal dignity; and the "inner essence" of a person referred to as alma or espíritu (soul or spirit). Colombian personalism does not easily tolerate the impersonal and abstract, but places high premium on intimate friendship and personal relationships. The urban middle individual retains this traditional value according to John

¹¹William L. Wonderly and Eugene A. Nida, "Cultural Differences and the Communication of Christian Values," Practical Anthropology, X:6 (November-December 1963), 242.

Gillin who claims that "for the middle-status individual, only those with whom he feels an intimate, personal relationship are trustworthy. Personal friendship, plus a kinship relationship of some kind, is essential...."¹² Protestant churches need flexible structures which allow personalism to be expressed.

2. Paternalism Toward Personal Freedom. Paternalism, a result of centuries of feudalistic orientation, is absolute reliance on a superior authority for decisions not only of important concerns of life, but also of trivial matters. Colombian society has been built around an authoritarian and hierarchical system known as the patrón-peón (protector-slave or laborer) relationship,¹³ which has controlled family, community, political, and religious life since the colonial era.

Within the urban middle sector there are growing signs of rebellion against old paternalistic patterns with a definite move toward personal freedom and the right of independent action. The shift toward social equalitarianism renders the middle strata potentially receptive for the Protestant concept of the "priesthood of all believers" in sharp contrast to the paternalistic authoritarianism of the Roman Catholic church.

3. Familism Toward Social Independence. Familism is a central social value of Latin society; to be a Latin American is to belong to

¹²Gillin, op. cit., p. 32.

¹³Lyle Saunders, "'Anglo' and Spanish-Speaking Americans: Contrasts and Similarities," Practical Anthropology, VII:5 (September-October 1960), 202.

la familia (the family). Family and extended kinship ties have been the chief link with the village community and the outside world. The father, as central authority, rules the household, arbitrates disputes, and makes all important decisions. The wife-mother's role is well defined as bearer-rearer of children and ama de casa (housekeeper).

Familism of this type is in rapid transition in middle sectors as Gillin points out: "This traditional pattern is breaking down among the more advanced and upward-mobile members of the middle segments, especially in the larger towns and cities."¹⁴ The urban middle family is no longer the sole integrative social unit. Family members in these strata are able to move about more freely and choose their area of interest and arena of activity. Protestant church structures designed to minister to family needs must recognize the reality of fragmentation in the urban family unit.

4. Fatalism Toward Activism. Fatalism is a social value emphasizing passive acceptance to the will of God or fate, associated with misfortune, tragedy, and death. This value is symbolized in the bullfight as man faces the bull, death incarnate, and in the elaborate death cult with attention on funerals and cemeteries. According to Eugene Nida, fatalism cuts the nerve of moral responsibility and overwhelms Latins with a sense of ultimate pessimism and melancholy prevalent in the major motifs of Latin American music and poetry.¹⁵

¹⁴Gillin, op. cit., pp. 33-4.

¹⁵Eugene A. Nida, "Communication of the Gospel to Latin Americans," Practical Anthropology, VIII:4 (July-August 1961), 146.

Among middle sector members the fatalistic complex is in the process of decadence. Through upward social mobility and the rewards of pragmatic efforts, there is movement toward an activism stimulated by viable aspirations and possibilities for a better life. Many Colombians of middle status believe that through economic development, modern technology, and participation in the social processes they are not helpless victims of fate, but are capable of determining their own destiny. A church which can harness this growing need for activism must provide participatory activities and more profoundly a theology and methodology for progress as part of a meaningful mission strategy.

This is not an exhaustive list of social values but indicates transition from traditional values to contemporary ones. An awareness of emerging social values is valuable knowledge in preparing a mission strategy of ministry to those experiencing re-socialization.

D. THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE URBAN MIDDLE STRATA

Throughout Latin America there is a rising tide of expectations among people of all social status. Nowhere is this more apparent than among the Colombian middle strata whose aspirations are both realistic and idealistic.

1. Realistic Possibilities. First, the urban middle strata aspire for continued upward social mobility. Middle groups discover that penetrating social barriers is easier in the impersonal atmosphere of the city because of decaying feudalistic class structures.¹⁶ The mid-

¹⁶Ralph L. Beals, "Social Stratification in Latin America," American Journal of Sociology, LVIII:4 (January 1953), 329.

dle strata continually capitalize on this situation to escalate socially. Social escalation is often characterized by prestige symbols comprising the correct usage of language, fashionable apparel, and cultural mannerisms in public.

Second, urban middle groups have strong nationalistic aspirations. These aspirations are domestically oriented toward increased educational opportunities, programs to improve public health services, greater social security benefits, and similar concerns for national progress. To accomplish these goals they support centralized government action as the only hope for promoting economic advancement and social improvement. Colombian nationalism can become xenophobic in face of a foreign threat, but normally nationalism within the urban middle aspires for a genuine Colombian selfhood with a sense of esteem for their culture, heritage, and nation.

These dual aspirations are interrelated because upward social mobility best occurs in the Colombian social system within a climate of national progress. The urban middle sector promotes domestically oriented nationalism which calls for social, technological, and economic progress as a desirable dynamic in nation building. National progress motivated by nationalistic aspirations stimulates modernization and industrialization. This process creates better jobs and new professions which enhances prestige and status and further advances upward social mobility among the urban middle sector.

2. Possible Deterrents. Despite progressive socio-economic advances several deterrents dim the light of middle strata aspirations.

There is a lack of "class consciousness" and little internal cohesiveness. Discussing the problem of social disunity Dix concludes:

Disparate in their aspirations and identifications, the Colombian middle sectors have been largely lacking in self-awareness and in unity as a social and political force. The dispersal of the middle sectors among Colombia's relatively numerous large urban centers works against ready cohesion.¹⁷

Without an identifiable ideology or thought pattern the middle strata cannot act as change agents, either as a liberalizing or as a stabilizing influence in the nation's social struggles.

In Colombia the urban middle strata have caused some shift in political power; nevertheless, diverse backgrounds and broad economic interests deter them from being politically monolithic.¹⁸ Recent voting patterns reveal that the urban-based middle electorate tend to support progressive-liberal platforms which favor modified forms of socialism. Their lack of political unity makes the middle strata's present political importance more potential than actual. According to Martin Needler, their political participation will increase in the future. He believes that their "heightened objective social status leads to heightened self-respect, which in turn provides them the psychological basis for political participation."¹⁹

In summary, the fundamental characteristics of the urban middle strata persons have been analyzed in terms of their location, identi-

¹⁷Dix, op. cit., p. 59.

¹⁸John J. Johnson, Political Change in Latin America (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), p. 4.

¹⁹Martin C. Needler, Political Development in Latin America (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 151.

fication, social values, and aspirations. The new urban middle sector is the group under investigation and toward which a mission strategy is to be designed. This new sector forms the unconsolidated strata without definitive social boundaries. Their identification is perceived in terms of occupation, profession, and, to a degree, by their level of education. They are involved in the broad spectra of business, education, scientific, governmental, and professional occupations in the city.

The middle strata's social values are in rapid transition and new patterns of life are emerging. Most of the traditional social values, with the exception of personalism, are in a state of change. There is a definite movement from paternalism toward personal freedom, familism toward social independence, and fatalism toward activism. With a new location in urban society and the emergence of new social values, the middle strata have heightened aspirations for a better way of life. The good life is viewed in terms of status, education, better professions and occupations which are produced through the dynamics of upward social mobility and a domestically oriented nationalism prevalent among their ranks. These realistic aspirations are partially deterred by the lack of "class consciousness" and their failure to formulate a unified political ideology. This configuration renders valuable insight into their individual personality and corporate behavior. These strata represent a social group undergoing the tensions of re-socialization and the turmoil of re-shaping their style of life to meet the demands of urban living.

In this total urban milieu and within middle strata, there are indications of an openness to adopting new social patterns and a recep-

tiveness to new ideas and ideals. Perhaps the Colombian Evangelical church's message and ministry could appeal to persons of these new social strata. Yet, church growth statistics reveal that Protestantism continues to win adherents from the urban proletariat and the urban peasant strata, not from the urban middle strata. Some missiologists have concluded that middle sectors are resistant to the Protestant position and unwilling to make new religious commitments. This apparent resistance may not reflect anti-religious attitudes or even anti-Evangelical prejudices per se, but may be an indication of inadequate mission strategies employed by Protestant churches. In Colombia, there are three main mission strategies that are currently utilized by various Evangelical groups. These strategies need to be critically examined to determine their degree of relevancy for the spiritual and social needs of middle strata persons in the contemporary urban situation.

CHAPTER IV

THE CURRENT MISSION STRATEGY MODELS

There are three mission strategies utilized today by Evangelical churches in Colombia. They are the Pentecostal model, the traditional model, and the revolutionary model. Unless the sole yardstick of a "successful" strategy is numerical growth, each model has merit and warrants serious consideration. Since God has not revealed the whole of His strategy, each model is espoused by ardent supporters who believe their particular approach is biblically defensible and methodologically justifiable. The purpose of critical examination of each model is not to judge its rightness or wrongness, but to pose this question: Are these models adequate to meet the spiritual and social needs of the urban middle strata person in light of his present situation?

A. THE PENTECOSTAL MODEL

James Goff estimates that one out of three Protestant Christians in Latin America belongs to a Pentecostal church. In Colombia, Pentecostals account for almost forty percent of the total Evangelical membership and comprise the most rapidly growing sector of Protestantism.¹

1. Basic Theology. The roots of Pentecostal theology are based

¹James E. Goff, "Census of Protestant Church Members in Colombia: 1969," (Bogotá: Office of Information and Public Relations, April 1969), p. 7.

on a biblicism which takes the Scriptures literally and accepts them uncritically. A central theological concern of Pentecostalism focuses on a doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The main features of this doctrine are: the baptism of the Holy Spirit, divine healing, speaking in tongues, the importance of prayer, deep emotional fervor, and evangelistic zeal.²

The Pentecostal message is centered around twin motifs: power and joy. Power for daily living and witness, joy in Christ and in service to God are recurring themes in Pentecostal preaching. Christian Lalive, a prominent Swiss sociologist, notes the experiential quality of their message:

In the pentecostal message, the affirmation of divine omnipotence is not an abstract theological postlude, but a living truth by faith. The power of God is not only proclaimed in hope: the Holy Spirit gives testimony to hope every day, through his gifts and miracles.³

In addition, the message is flavored with the imminent second coming of Christ and the proclaiming of thaumaturgy which is incorporated and practiced in their rituals.

The Pentecostal church structures are patterned after the traditional Latin family system with tight communal discipline and authoritarian leadership. Such structures provide the rural migrant with an emotional affinity, a social security, and a feeling of personal dignity and identity not experienced since leaving his face-to-face

²Eugene A. Nida, "The Indigenous Church," (New York: Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, 1960), pp. 3-4.

³Christian Lalive, El Refugio de las Masas (The Refuge of the Masses) (Santiago, Chile: Editorial del Pacifico, 1968), p. 80.

rural community. Lalive views the Pentecostal church as an integrative community for the person who "lived isolated, on the fringe in a brutal society...is taken into the heart of the church, is called 'brother,' and immediately feels integrated...."⁴

Church life is centralized in the worship service where there is freedom of ecstatic religious expression providing a meaningful mechanism to rise above the mundane existence of lower strata living. The church is further characterized by a set of sanctions and a personal and corporate code of moral conduct which is maintained through strict discipline and enforced by charismatic authoritarian leaders.

The mission of the Pentecostal church is stated in precise terms by one of their leading missiologists, Melvin Hodges:

We are to preach the message of God to every creature in such a way that regenerated converts will result. These will form local churches, established according to the New Testament pattern and operating as self-sustaining and self-propagating units, to the end that vital churches will multiply in every area of the world.⁵

To those who criticize Pentecostals for expending most of their time and efforts in this strategy, they answer, "Let us put first things first!"⁶ There is no objection to social welfare ministries, such as orphanages, schools, homes for the aged, etc., but in the light of the evangelistic imperative and the imminent second parousia, the main con-

⁴Ibid., p. 81.

⁵Melvin L. Hodges, "Administering for Church Growth," in Donald Anderson McGavern (ed.), Church Growth and Christian Mission (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 217.

⁶Melvin L. Hodges, "A Pentecostal's View of Mission Strategy," International Review of Missions, LVII:277 (July 1968), 309.

cern is that converts be won, churches be planted and multiplied, and leaders be called to preach the gospel to every creature.

Pentecostal theology takes a dim view of the Christian's participation and the church's involvement in the world. It is held that a gulf exists between Christ and culture, church and world, spirit and flesh which cannot be bridged by the believer. Under H. Richard Niebuhr's classic typology, most Pentecostals assume a Christ-against-culture stance. He writes concerning this position: "Whatever may be the customs of the society in which the Christian live...Christ is seen as opposed to them so that he confronts men with the challenge of an 'either-or' decision."⁷ As culture despisers, most Latin Pentecostals guard themselves against worldliness, usually associated with moral vices, and attempt through ascetic practices to maintain spiritual and moral purity. This preoccupation compels them to reject participation in worldly affairs and creates a sectarian spirit which allows selective fellowship with other Evangelical groups and few associational ties with Roman Catholics other than a "witnessing" contact.

2. Basic Methodology. Pentecostal theology is propagated by a two-pronged methodology: strict adherence to indigenous (autonomous) church⁸ principles and a strong evangelistic thrust.

⁷H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951), p. 40.

⁸An autonomous church, (a church capable of existing and sustaining itself independently of outside power or control), more accurately describes the Pentecostal principle. However, the term "indigenous" church is preferred because it is commonly understood by nationals and missionaries to refer to the self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting principle.

The advance of Colombian Pentecostalism is partially the result of implementing, in program and policy, indigenous church principles (via Roland Allen) of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation on the level of the local congregation. Hodges affirms that these principles are inviolable in terms of the basic message proclaimed, local response to plant and to multiply churches, and economic support for internal and external church programs.⁹ Flexibility is permissible in the approach to achieve defined goals, but the indigenous principles are not optional.

A key factor in this model is the type of church government adopted. Authoritarian ecclesiology, which allows for liberty of expression in the services but demands a highly disciplined leadership, is the methodology.¹⁰ Under this church polity pastors and lay leaders emerge through an informal apprenticeship system which permits neophytes to be trained and seasoned by experience before assuming leadership roles in the church. Local churches mobilize their human resources to the last member for evangelistic purposes. Converts are urged to witness which develops an urgent sense of individual responsibility for evangelizing their own countrymen. Mission strategy is therefore geared to a quantitative church growth formula, clearly enunciated by Hodges who states:

⁹Hodges, "A Pentecostal's View...", p. 305.

¹⁰Jean Baptiste August Kessler, Jr., A Study of the Older Protestant Missions and Churches in Peru and Chile (Goes, Netherlands: Oosterban & Le Cointre, 1967), pp. 327-8.

Whatever other good things the Church may do, its success in promoting the Kingdom of God must be measured by the number of people it can bring into vital relationship with Christ and the number of local units of the body of Christ that it can produce.¹¹

3. Limitations for Urban Middle Strata. The Pentecostal mission strategy is unquestionably effective in terms of its defined evangelistic and church planting goals with the urban peasant and proletariat in Colombia. Their simple biblical theology and clearly defined methodology has reached the socially dispossessed rural migrant, who has been neglected by Roman Catholicism and generally untouched by traditional Protestantism. It is no secret that Pentecostal strategy is designed for lower mass mentality and those of economic marginality in the cities. This is the conclusion of Alan Walker, a prominent non-Pentecostal churchman: "That Pentecostalism is touching the poorer millions of Latin America is of deep significance. God is undoubtedly using the movement to break through to the masses in that continent."¹²

Is the Pentecostal strategy adequate to meet the spiritual and social needs of the urban middle strata or does it possess inherent limitations for this sector of society? All people, regardless of social status are in need of the Christian message. However, because of differing socio-psychological needs, the Pentecostal-type message appears too emotional and anti-intellectual for the more educated urban middle strata. Nida sees this limitation in observing that Pentecostal

¹¹Hodges, "A Pentecostal's View...", p. 305.

¹²Alan Walker, "Where Pentecostalism is Mushrooming," Christian Century, LXXXV:3 (January 17, 1968), 82.

leaders

...emphasize too exclusively the emotional and exhortatory aspects of their message so that as a result they fail to "feed the flock." The people are emotionally whipped Sunday after Sunday and only those who can stand such a strong emotional psychological flagellation come out spiritually alive.¹³

The authoritarianism prominent in Pentecostal churches runs contrary to the urban middle person's emerging desire for equalitarianism in all areas of life, including religion. There is a perceptible shift away from blind devotion and loyalty to either political or religious personalities who tend to dominate a group through strict discipline and imposed codes of behavior. For many middle sector persons religious rules and dogmatism, Protestant or Roman Catholic, tend to heighten their unresponsiveness to the church.

Another limitation in the Pentecostal model which may repulse a middle strata individual is the separatistic view regarding the church and world. John Housley believes "The net effect of Pentecostalism is to take men out of society and put them into the church. Social isolation is almost total...."¹⁴ It is doubtful that a church which is a religious refuge and attempts to confine involvement in society solely in terms of evangelistic witness will make an impact upon urban middle people who increasingly participate in broad social associations. The urban middle strata's nationalistic appreciation for Colombian culture and heritage, realistic aspirations for improved economic conditions,

¹³Nida, "The Indigenous Church," p. 11.

¹⁴John B. Housley, "Review Article: Church Growth and Christian Mission," International Review of Missions, LVII:227 (July 1968), 360.

and increased upward social mobility seem contradictory to a Pentecostal life-style which is other-world oriented with little concern for present social, political, and economic realities.

On the basis of analyzing the Pentecostal model, it seems improbable that this mission strategy can effectively communicate the gospel in meaningful ways to the Colombian of urban middle status. Pentecostal theology and methodology are geared to the basic needs of the urban poor masses but are handicapped and inadequate to respond creatively to the spiritual-social necessities of the person located in the urban middle sector.

B. THE TRADITIONAL MODEL

In Colombia the traditional mission strategy model is represented by the large majority of historic Protestant denominations, most conservative independent church groups, and non-Pentecostal national churches. Numerically, these churches retain sixty percent of Colombia's Protestant membership.

1. Basic Theology. The core of traditional theology is conservative, thus similar in nature to the Pentecostal position. There is less emphasis on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and little or no accent on outward ecstatic manifestations. Individual repentance, salvation, and holiness are the fundamental themes of the message. The messengers tend to imploy archaic biblical language which reflects stereotyped attitudes.¹⁵ The gospel is often proclaimed in dualistic form in which

¹⁵R. Kenneth Strachan, The Inescapable Calling (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 43.

the soul's needs are detached from the physical and social needs of the total person. At times the message is polemical in nature and apologetic in tone.

In the traditional model ecclesiastical theology is a caricature of Euro-American church patterns with concern for organization and order. Traditional churches display less authoritarianism than Pentecostal churches and utilize a more congregational and representative-type polity. However, Nida notes that in many traditional evangelical churches the leadership exerts just as exacting a censorship over the religious views of its members as does the Church of Rome.¹⁶ To differing degrees this creates a ghetto church in which programs "involve its members in a number of activities large enough to leave little time for association with non-Protestants, except of course those deriving from occupational obligations."¹⁷ These churches in Colombia, in a continual struggle for religious liberty and equality, adhere to strict separation of church and state.

While many traditional church are engaged in diverse ministries, theoretically, the overall thrust remains evangelistic. With some exceptions, service and educational institutions along with various social work ministries are viewed as instruments of evangelistic outreach. By whatever means, the Christian mission is conceived as winning individuals to Christ through conversion and incorporating

¹⁶Eugene A. Nida, "Communication of the Gospel to Latin Americans," Practical Anthropology, VIII:4 (July-August 1961), 148.

¹⁷Emilio Willems, Followers of the New Faith (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967), p. 166.

them into the church through baptism. Colombian church growth studies show that the traditional mission model is less effective than the Pentecostal model in terms of numbers of converts won and new churches planted.¹⁸

Traditional theology insists on a radical break with the world. While there are variant views in the traditional spectrum, some form of separatism from the world is practiced. Christ-against-culture (Niebuhr) is the predominant position resulting in a pietistic and cultic brand of Protestantism. Stress on other-worldly salvation conveys the idea that a person is converted out of his community, out of his caste, or out of his culture and is transplanted into a new religious enclave. The church becomes an ark of salvation in the tempest of a world society, isolating the believer from his culture.

2. Basic Methodology. Excluding certain national churches, traditional ones were established by missionary personnel and financially supported by foreign funds. This resulted in a foreign institutional methodology modeled after non-indigenous principles. In a genuine concern for human betterment, traditional churches built hospitals and clinics, partly to relieve suffering, partly to break down prejudices, and partly as a witness of the faith.¹⁹ These institutions were conceived by some evangelical leaders as instruments of evangelism and by

¹⁸William R. Read, Victor M. Monterroso, and Harmon A. Johnson, Latin American Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), pp. 126-8.

¹⁹Donald Anderson McGavran, The Bridges of God (New York: Friendship Press, 1955), pp. 52-3.

others as service arms of the church.

The traditional model established educational institutions to educate children of Evangelical parents, provide a higher standard of education, and create a favorable climate among the non-Protestant community. Evangelical schools in Colombia have been a means of communicating and winning people to Christ, but the indirect effects have perhaps been paramount. Leslie Lyall recognizes these indirect affects declaring that "indirect benefits accrued to the church and state from Christian education, and the good will created by these institutions is much greater than can be estimated in terms of conversions and additions to the church."²⁰ Some Colombian church leaders debate the feasibility of institutional methodology which seems to both buttress and burden the church.

3. Limitations for Urban Middle Strata. The traditional mission strategy model has had immeasurable influence and impact during its more than one hundred year history in Colombia. No one can underestimate the dedication of national and foreign Evangelicals, the faithfulness of believers in the face of struggle and persecution, the clear proclamation of an Evangelical gospel. This model was particularly effective in rural areas and small towns in Colombia where many converts were won and churches planted. More so than the Pentecostal model, it has reached some persons of middle urban status. The question

²⁰Leslie T. Lyall, "Missionary Strategy in the Twentieth Century," Evangelical Missions Quarterly, II:2 (Winter 1966), 71.

remains: Can this model hope to minister, win, and serve substantial numbers in the middle sector, or is it inadequate in its present form?

Since middle strata people are the primary consumers of newspapers and books, are receivers of advanced education, are knowledgeable of human affairs, and are developing a critical mind regarding all areas of life, a fixed theology that cannot bear critical examination or be openly discussed and challenged in the light of other disciplines may be suspect by these with above average intellectual capacities. There is also need for a wider application of theology which assists middle strata individuals to confront deeper moral, ethical, and cultural issues of modern urban society. A purely individualistic and pietistic theological perspective which demands only a high level of spiritual dedication, but little mental commitment, may not have an enduring impact or attraction on thinking people. Arthur Glasser, a conservative Protestant spokesman, observes: "Our theology fails to grapple with culture. Our ethic does not embrace the totality of human endeavor...."²¹

Perhaps the biggest barrier in limiting the traditional model's meaningfulness for the middle sector is its denial of the world. With the dichotomy of church as good and world as evil, there is danger of creating ambivalent attitudes if a radical "either-or" choice must be

²¹Arthur F. Glasser, "Confession, Church Growth, and Authentic Unity in Mission Strategy," in Norman A. Horner (ed.), Protestant Crosscurrents in Mission (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 181.

made between Christ and culture.²² Given the new social values and the non-traditional life styles emerging among urban middle sector people, they will probably not feel a magnetism to a gospel of total separation from a world which has proved socially emancipating and economically beneficial.

Finally, the traditional model in Colombia has not demonstrated involvement in social problems and has cautioned Christians against responsible participation in politics except to exercise their right to vote. If the traditional Evangelical church continues to disavow political participation at any level and fails to initiate programs of significant social action, the new awareness of the urban middle strata to national issues will be quenched instead of ignited by Christian faith. Héctor Valencia, a leading Colombian Evangelical, expresses concern over this serious inadequacy which limits the outreach of the church:

Christianity appears too often to the outsider as a respectable Puritan way of life, but it does not appeal to him as the possible solution for poverty, ignorance, disease, and underdevelopment. This may be because the Church is seldom able to show any real accomplishments in these areas which are so close and so tangible to the common man, thanks in part to yesteryear's short-sighted policy of considering social action something apart from the message of the Church.²³

Without a more flexible theology, some internal reforms of church organization, and some new experimental methodology it is naive to be-

²²William L. Wonderly and Jorge Lara-Braud, "Some Convictions of a Young Church," Practical Anthropology, XIV:1 (January-February 1967), 13.

²³Héctor G. Valencia, "Progress Under Persecution," Christianity Today, VII:21 (July 19, 1963), 14.

lieve that the traditional mission strategy model is adequately designed to witness and win significant numbers of middle strata people in their contemporary urban situation.

C. THE REVOLUTIONARY MODEL

A third model exists in Colombia within several traditional churches as a small nucleus of Protestant clergy and laity who espouse a revolutionary mission strategy. Revolutionary strategy represents a radical departure from the theological conservatism and evangelistic institutional methodology of either the Pentecostal or traditional models. It is revolutionary for Colombian Protestantism because it radically moves away from personal piety, the institutionalized church, traditional evangelism and church planting to concern for social problems, political structures, and the humanization of life in the world. This model is widely accepted by leading Evangelical churchmen in the River Plate Republics, but within Colombian Protestantism it is not yet widespread.

1. Basic Theology. The nature of revolutionary theology is cosmic in scope. The main tenets of the message evident in these statements are: God broke into history in Christ, thus the kingdom of God is already present; Christ is active in the world, creating, redeeming, and leading all things to fulfillment; Christ is Lord of both the church and the world; the church as a serving community should be involved in movements in history which manifest God's activity; God was in Christ reconciling the world through the cross, thus the redemption of the

world is an accomplished fact; the gospel calls Christians to respond in repentance, faith, and obedience to what God is going in the world; and the Christian's basic concern is not for the church, but for the world.²⁴

The church is conceived as a community of believers, a new diaspora, who live in the midst of society sharing in all human hopes and problems, thus helping to weave with all humanity the fabric of history.²⁵ A distinction is drawn between the "manifest" (remnant) and the "latent" (secular) church which broadens the concept of church to include those who do not openly confess or acknowledge Christ as Lord. Explaining the importance of this concept Hans-Werner Gensichen writes: "...the 'latent' church, the silent fellowship of those who belong unknowingly to the anonymous Christ-in-the-world, is then much more important in the purpose of God than the 'manifest' church."²⁶

The revolutionary nature of this model is depicted in its conception of the church's mission. M. Richard Shaull, a leading spokesman, formulates the church's mission as follows:

To make known to all men the new possibilities of life available to them in Jesus Christ, in the midst of their existence in the world, as they give up the old and are

²⁴M. Richard Shaull, "Toward a Reformulation of Objectives," in Horner, op. cit., pp. 59-64

²⁵Mauricio Lopez, "The Political Dynamics of Latin Society Today," in Harvey G. Cox (ed.), The Church Amid Revolution (New York: Association Press, 1967), p. 148.

²⁶Hans-Werner Gensichen, Living Mission (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 57.

renewed on the road to the future; and to work for the formation of a community of faith there that can be instrumental to this purpose.²⁷

This strategy encourages the church's direct involvement in changing socio-political structures which liberate and humanize life. The church that is obedient to faith and relevant to the revolutionary situation in Latin America gives high priority to studying socio-political problems and plans appropriate responses.

The revolutionary strategists object to formation of ghettos of Christian culture; rather they are committed to the renewal of culture. Their missionary efforts will not force persons into a religious framework which is considered essentially dehumanizing, but a Christian mission which is to expose and break the power of all structures which enslave, enclose, and inhibit men from freedom and maturity. In brief, "The object of the Christian mission then becomes that of providing man come of age with the resources available in Christ for sustaining this freedom and thus moving toward meaning and fulfillment in historical existence."²⁸

A conversionist idea of Christ, the transformer of culture, which has an open, positive, and hopeful attitude toward culture, reflects their theology of the world.²⁹ Because the world belongs to God and Christ is Lord, incarnationally present through the latent and

²⁷Shaull, op. cit., p. 101.

²⁸Ibid., p. 99.

²⁹Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 192.

manifest church, there is a union of secular and sacred and no separation between church and world.

2. Basic Methodology. The basic methodology to implement these theological concepts is revolutionary in outlook and ecumenical in spirit. The church is called to participate in the construction of a new Latin American society. The revolutionary church leadership realizes the initial step is the reformation of present church structures and a change of current attitudes among Evangelicals. The brilliant Colombian Protestant sociologist, Orlando Fals-Borda, makes this point clear when he observes that "The internal transformation of the Christian church, the diminishing of its terrible retarded culture, is the primary urgency...and she must modify her attitude before a changing world...."³⁰ When the reformed Evangelical church discovers new forms of witness and develops new attitudes toward the world, it is freed to participate in the reconstruction of society as an agent of change.

Precise methodology is contingent on the situation but the church may respond through prophetic pronouncements, direct involvement in politics, social intervention, civil disruption, and, under certain circumstances, radical actions designed to destroy old structures and create new ones. Shauli proposes the formation of small avant-garde units which will organize groups for protest and political pressure.

³⁰Orlando Fals-Borda, "Una Estrategia para la Iglesia en la Transformación de América Latina," ("A Strategy for the Church in the Transformation of Latin America"), Cristianismo y Sociedad, II:6 (1964), 38.

This Evangelical vanguard will attempt to infiltrate key institutions and organizations motivating these groups to assist in the development of a new social, economic, and political order.³¹

Since love of neighbor is thought to be best expressed through social structures, the church's priority logically compels it to total involvement in breaking down those systems which dehumanize persons. Through the redemption of society's existing structures and a reformation of its politics, there is hope for justice and peace.³² This revolutionary methodology incorporates some aspects of Marxist principles, but does not hold to Marx's atheistic or materialistic philosophy.

The final component of the methodology of the revolutionary model is its ecumenical dimension. A mission strategy of such grand design requires an ecumenism that cuts across denominational and confessional barriers. Protestant clergy and laity, risking participation to revolutionize the socio-political structures and to create a new society, will do so without reference to ecclesiastical differences.³³ Various ecumenical organizations operating in Latin America, such as ISAL (Church and Society in Latin America) and UNELAM (an ecumenical committee to promote Evangelical unity), through publications and conferences unite Latin Protestants by coordinating efforts and stimulat-

³¹M. Richard Shaull, "The New Latin Revolutionaries and the U.S.," Christian Century, LXXXV:3 (January 17, 1968), 70.

³²Emilio Castro, "Protestantism and the Latin American Conscience," Latin American News Letter, LXVIII (July 1968), 11.

³³William L. Wipfler, "Is the Traditional Concept of Mission Work Still Workable in Latin America?" Latin American News Letter, LXVIII (July 1968), 1.

ing revolutionary mission strategy.

3. Limitations for Urban Middle Strata. The revolutionary model is gaining momentum among educated intellectuals and social activists in Colombian Protestantism. Many Evangelical students are attracted by both its theology and methodology. In view of the model's recent beginnings it is premature to measure its impact within the Protestant church or its influence in society. Is this model the answer to the spiritual needs and socio-political concerns of the majority of urban middle strata people in Colombia?

The revolutionary model defines the message of the church in cosmic terms, stresses the earthly existence of the church, and mainly promotes its social involvement. As previously noted, the urban middle person's chief social value of some permanency is grounded in personalism. Intimate friendship, individual human dignity, and close personal relationships supercede any type of collectivism. If the Christian faith and life are proclaimed in cosmic terminology and the church's raison d'être is related primarily to organizing for socio-political action, this approach may prove unattractive and unacceptable to the middle strata. While educated and intelligent, the Colombian middle strata may regard revolutionary theology as too sophisticated and the methodology as too impersonal.

It might seem that the model's magneticism would lie in appealing to the urban middle's nationalistic instincts, thus motivating them to a political radicalism in search of a new Latin society. In Colombia this presupposition is doubtful in the light of the middle

sector's political stance: neither radically right nor left. Rapid social and economic gains through urbanization under the present socio-political structures make it appear that the middle strata favor change through evolutionary processes not by violent revolution. During the past fifteen years the urban middle in Colombia has supported a broad conservative-liberal coalition government which favors progressive reforms through stability rather than by abrupt or radical change.³⁴ The urban middle sector's political pragmatism is deeper than a dream for change through revolution. Generally, this sector has not concluded that violent revolution is necessary or inevitable and believes directed social change by peaceful means is more fruitful.³⁵

Through the union of sacred and secular under the Lordship of Christ, the revolutionary model sees no distance between the church and world. The urban middle strata may seriously question accepting a Christian style of life if they discover no distinctive quality about the church or any unique sense of comradeship in the church. Many of these people have abandoned the Roman Catholic church in Colombia because of its close identification with secular culture and power politics by which it has failed to be salt, light, and leaven in society. It is unlikely the urban middle individual would be attracted to a new religious community unless there is some discontinuity between the

³⁴James Payne, Patterns of Conflict in Colombia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 178-9.

³⁵Brady Tyson, "Romantic Revolutionaries as False Prophets," Latin American News Letter, Special Supplement, LXVI (December 1967), 14.

church and world and some specialty not found in other social organizations.

The revolutionary model desires to align the Protestant church on the side of radical social and political change. Those committed to this model demonstrate a genuine concern for the problems confronting Colombians and are zealous for responsible action to create a new society. An elite core of ecumenically-minded churchmen and Protestant university students is enthusiastic about the revolutionary model. However, it is improbable that the radical theology and revolutionary methodology can have an impact on the strata of society which possess basic spiritual and social needs incompatible with this model's main thrust.

In retrospect, the Pentecostal, traditional, and revolutionary mission strategy models have been analyzed in terms of their basic theology and methodology. Biblical literalism, emphasis on the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and an other-worldly message are the key concerns of Pentecostal theology. Their basic methodology is evangelism, with its goal to win and baptize converts and plant new churches. The traditional model possesses a similar theological perspective with the exception of external manifestations. Its message is basically individualistic and geared toward personal salvation, insisting on a radical break with culture. Traditional methodology is centered in personal evangelism and utilizes institutions and service organizations as a means of church outreach. The revolutionary model is the newest approach in Colombia with the fewest number of adherents. There is a concern for the cosmic dimensions of the gospel which emphasize cor-

porate society as the important focus of the Christian message. This model is designed to attack the social evils of the day and create basic changes in the political, economic, and social structures of society.

Each of these models per se is inadequate, both in terms of theology and methodology, to meet the spiritual and social needs of the urban middle strata at present. The Pentecostal model is inadequate for the middle strata because it is fundamentally geared to reach only the lower classes of society. It propagates a simplistic theology, promotes emotionalism, and possesses an authoritarian-type church structure. Limitations for middle strata persons evident in the traditional model include: a too individualistic and pietistic theological stance, the rejection of culture, and refusal to participate in the social concerns of society. The inadequacy of the revolutionary model is primarily sophisticated theology and radical methodology which appeal to politically oriented activists, but are unacceptable to the mainstream of urban middle strata society.

The contemporary urban situation calls for a new strategy which involves a shift in its central locus, a more flexible theology and new church forms and patterns. A new situational mission strategy, which may include certain aspects of the other models, will stress new priorities and develop more precise methods tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of the urban strata person. It is imperative that Evangelical church leaders in Colombia begin to think in terms of a re-evaluation of strategic places and persons and relocate their total mission resources. There is an urgency to shift the geographic locus

of mission strategy from the rural to urban areas to move toward a new sociological locus concentrating on the emerging urban middle strata, and to focus on several specific urban groups.

CHAPTER V

THE LOCI OF THE SITUATIONAL MISSION STRATEGY MODEL

The situational mission strategy possesses several distinct loci, offering an alternative to the foci of the current strategy models utilized in Colombia. The new model's geographical locus is the urban context, its sociological locus is the emerging middle strata, and its strategic groups' locus is urban youth, urban women, and university students. If the new strategy is to be employed effectively, Protestant leaders in Colombia must be convinced that these three-dimensional loci are of crucial significance.

A. THE URBAN LOCUS

Although a large proportion of present mission work is still carried on in the rural, small town areas of Colombia, a definite shift in thinking and attitude toward the city is essential.

1. From Rural Toward Urban Shift. Colombian Evangelicals have tended to concentrate mission efforts in the rural regions of the country. At times there has been a feverish push to move into geographical frontier areas which seemingly provide emotional appeal for church workers and spark promotional value and financial support at "home." Louis King is correct when he concludes: "There is a strong tendency to expend principal energies on that which appeals to popular imagina-

tion and pass by the vast concentrated urban populations."¹ The Protestant church's penetration into small villages and towns, reaching isolated aboriginal tribes and poor rural peasants has been commendable, and, at times, even heroic. But today the Colombian cities are, without parallel, the most promising locus for mission outreach and offer the greatest potential for both quantitative and qualitative church growth. Harold Cook raises the critical question: "...is it not high time that we should stress the reaching of the city dweller? Should we also not consider it more strategic, since the cities are beginning to dominate the nations?"² In light of the population concentration, rapid social change, and revolutionary moods and movements in the cities, the answer is a strong affirmative, yes; the urban areas are the crucial locus for the church's mission in Colombia.

In addition to the population build-up in Colombian cities, resulting from the process of urbanization described in chapter two, the precedent of biblical history provides a persuasive case for locating mission resources in urban areas. The Old Testament prophets centered much of their ministry on the social, political, and religious tensions which existed in the cities of the Hebrew nation. Jesus recognized the structures of power centralized in the city and chose Jerusalem for His ultimate confrontation with the religious leaders and civic rulers.

¹Louis L. King, "Urbanization and Missions," (New York: Christian and Missionary Alliance, November 1960), p. 3.

²Harold R. Cook, Strategy of Missions (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963), p. 92.

Paul's missionary methodology centered in the great communication centers, the crossroads of culture, language, and religion of the Roman Empire. Lowell Noble notes that Paul did not attempt a broad saturation-type evangelism or church planting in a wide-spread geographical area; rather, he chose prominent cities in which to localize his missionary endeavors.³

New Testament mission methodology need not be applied automatically or uncritically in every century nor adopted as the final authoritative strategy model for every situation. However, Paul's apparent mission strategy renders foundational support to the argument for a new strategy which calls for a fundamental shift in location from a rural to an urban locus. At least two Protestant church groups in Colombia have transferred their primary emphasis from a rural to urban focus and have discovered an advantageous situation for Christian witness and church outreach. They report that Cali, Colombia's third largest city, is especially receptive to the Evangelical message. Several researchers disclose:

The Mennonite Brethren and the Cumberland Presbyterians... have proven the value of such a change of emphasis. Both can date their increased growth and a new pattern of support and stewardship from the decision to emphasize urban church-planting.⁴

All evidence indicates the necessity for Colombian Protestant church

³Lowell L. Noble, "Can St. Paul's Methods Be Ours?" Practical Anthropology, IV:4 (July-August 1961), 182.

⁴William R. Read, Victor M. Monterroso, and Harmon A. Johnson, Latin American Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 305.

and mission leaders to make strenuous plans to shift the major emphasis from the rural locus to total mission involvement in the city.

2. Favorable Socio-Cultural Conditions. Colombian cities are the locale of a society in transition and the centers for intellectual ferment and cultural change. Urban areas provide the possibility of revolt against the socio-cultural status quo, traditional mores, and historically accepted patterns of behavior. According to Emilio Willems' findings, rapid social change is beneficial to the emergence and dissemination of social change and innovation.⁵ While some traditional authoritarianism is still present in urban culture, urbanization, secularization, and re-socialization are beginning to move urbanites to the frontiers of a more equalitarian style of life.

Colombian cities are undergoing constant change--a tearing down and rebuilding which is the hallmark of a society in the modus operandi of urbanization and modernization. Willems believes that Protestant Christianity is making substantial inroads in Latin America precisely because of social transition and instability in the city. His studies verify the fact that Protestantism has greater acceptance within the milieu of rapid social change than in traditional social structures. Willems concludes:

Heavy concentration of Protestants are correlated with changes strongly affecting the traditional structures of the society; conversely, Protestantism may be expected to be relatively weak in areas that have had little or no exposure to such changes.⁶

⁵Emilio Willems, Followers of the New Faith (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967), pp. 259-60.

⁶Ibid., p. 13.

He further states that "it could be proved...that Protestantism attracted more followers as the process of culture change gained momentum and the traditional agrarian structure...entered a phase of increasing deterioration."⁷ This evidence suggests a close relationship between the expansion of Protestantism and the emergence of an urbanized society.

The Evangelical church in Colombia has no reason to deplore rapid change in the city. The disrupting forces implicit in urban societal change allow more individual freedom from old rural restraints and make a person more receptive to a new way of life. Social anonymity generates a climate increasingly advantageous for the presentation of the Evangelical gospel to the urbanite who lives in a transitional situation. Therefore, the old mission patterns are obsolete and cannot creatively be adopted to the urban situation. The favorable urban conditions call for a mission strategy devoid of agrarian thought patterns and attitudes.

Insight into the sociological and anthropological shape of urban life is an important touchstone in devising a mission strategy. There can be little question that the urban locus offers highly conducive socio-cultural conditions for Protestant advance in Colombia. Application of the situational mission strategy partially depends on a willingness of Colombian Protestants to shift mission priorities from the rural scene to the urban setting. It also requires a clear understanding and positive acceptance of the contemporary city as rendering fertile soil for evangelism, service, and ministry.

⁷Ibid, p. 248.

B. THE MIDDLE STRATA LOCUS

The emerging urban middle strata are the sociological locus of the situational mission strategy. Many Evangelical church leaders remain skeptical about a socially selective mission strategy. They retain frozen attitudes concerning the possibility of effectuating a decisive Protestant impact on these new middle strata individuals.

Arnold Cook, a veteran missionary to Colombia, conducted a survey trying to ascertain the degree of involvement in urban evangelism among all major Evangelical missions. To the question: "What class of people is your mission reaching in the cities?" the majority response was the upper lower class (urban peasant) and the lower middle class (urban proletariat). The same survey also revealed that only two missions considered the urban middle strata as a vital sector of society to reach with the Evangelical message.⁸ More than a decade ago, Kenneth Strachan spoke about this lack of interest among Latin American Protestants and their inability to employ methods designed to reach upward socially. Speaking directly about the middle strata, he stated that "no concerted effort has been made to reach them. Our evangelical message, worship service, literature, radio programming, are still geared almost exclusively to the less educated people."⁹ This basic attitude prevails in Colombia, despite the fact that nearly one person

⁸Arnold Cook, "Urban Evangelism," (Cali, Colombia: December 1968), pp. 3-4.

⁹R. Kenneth Strachan, "Tomorrow's Task in Latin America," Christianity Today, III:6 (December 22, 1958), 5.

out of four residing in the city calls himself a member of the middle strata. The situational strategy advocates a shift from mass and lower class strategies to a more personal and selective strategy with the middle urban strata as its primary target. This does not mean an abandonment of differing approaches to lower social groups, rather it is a call for some urban Protestant churches to change their attitude and strategy toward the middle strata.

1. From Mass and Lower Class Toward the Selective Urban Middle Strata. If there is to be a realistic transference in emphasis to the urban middle sector, several common objections voiced by Colombian church leaders must be analyzed and answered.

The first objection raised is a concern that a specialized "class" strategy contradicts the New Testament principle of the equality of all human beings regardless of class, caste, or color. Further, some Colombian Protestant national and missionary leaders claim that Christianity is a religion that should not recognize social, cultural, and economic difference. They attempt to minimize an accent on a particular societal unit or on "class" distinctions within the church. They argue that Jesus' band of followers represented the poorer breed of Palestinian society and the majority of Paul's converts in the early church were from the lower working classes: laborers, freed men, and slaves.

A careful study of the New Testament does not seem to support these arguments. From biblical and extra-biblical materials, it is impossible to assert unequivocally that the disciples of Jesus and the

constituency of the early church were predominantly lower, poor classes. Eugene Nida renders valuable insight into the social makeup of the followers of Jesus and the early Christians:

The early church contained proportionately few rich and nobleOn the other hand, the church was not merely a movement of slaves or the destitute. Insofar as we know anything about the background of Jesus' disciples, they seem to have been largely middle-class persons. After all, independent fishermen (their families owned boats and hired day laborers), certainly could not be regarded as lower class....According to the glimpses that we get in the Epistles, though the church ruled out no class its driving forces nevertheless seemed to have come from the "dynamic middle" of society.¹⁰

Furthermore, while Jesus, Paul, and Peter experienced broad social contact, their ministries were primarily to restricted groups. Jesus' message and ministry were directed to the "lost sheep of Israel, Paul's to the Gentile world, and Peter's to the Jew.¹¹ A mission strategy aimed at a restricted audience or selective group is not a repudiation of New Testament principles or early Christian mission patterns.

A second objection to a socially selective strategy is the belief that the New Testament subscribes to mass strategy as the best method of winning converts to the Christian faith. Those mission strategists who view numerical church growth as the final evidence of a "successful" methodology strongly support the mass approach. Since the majority of current statistical church growth in Latin America is not coming from the middle strata of society, some authorities assert that

¹⁰Eugene A. Nida, "Current Strategy in Missions: Communication," HIS, XXII:6 (March 1962), 25-6.

¹¹Matthew 15:24; Galatians 2:7.

the church should concentrate on people of the urban lower classes from which there is substantial growth.¹²

There is no doubt that Jesus addressed the multitudes, that Paul preached to mass audiences, and that Peter proclaimed the gospel to large gatherings of people. However, it is also true that the Gospels record many incidences when Jesus withdrew from the crowds and turned His attention to instructing a selective group of people. In the Acts and Epistles, Paul exerted much time and effort in preaching to and teaching a small company of believers, especially in their homes. The giant communicators of the Christian message in the New Testament actually employed mass strategy on comparatively few occasions. Their overall appeal was more personal and their strategy more selective. Nida, in supporting this idea, indicates that "neither Jesus nor Paul seemed to focus their attention on the masses....Rather they spent a high proportion of time in concentrated communication with a relatively few persons."¹³ There is little biblical evidence to sustain these common objections or to deny the validity of advocating a more selective mission strategy without committing an injustice to New Testament mission principles.

In Colombia, where there exists a pronounced consciousness of social prestige and "class" status, it is foolish to believe one mission strategy is sufficient for all social levels. It is doubtful that

¹²Read, op. cit., p. 229.

¹³Nida, op. cit., p. 25.

these feelings about their position in the social structure can be changed by insisting on a mass strategy, preaching a "status-less" gospel, or planting a "class-less" church. A strategy which takes seriously the social dynamics operating in a specific sector may expect a greater receptivity to the Protestant church's message and ministry. Again Nida elucidates this significant concept. He writes:

In an urban society, church growth is more likely to follow geographical, occupational, and friendship lines....Thus, in a class-divided urban society, Protestant churches are likely to consist primarily of a single class. This is not only because birds of a feather flock together, but also because interpersonal communication which in social structures is primarily within a class rather than between classes, is much more likely to be effective within a single class structure.¹⁴

Disregarding social stratification or ignoring homogeneous units and webs of relationships tends to diminish the effectiveness of Evangelical witness. An awareness of the social dynamics operative within a given strata of society is a key factor in designing a mission strategy which is relevant to the social and spiritual needs of particular persons.

If there is an acceptance of the city as one crucial locus and an openness to the urban middle sector as a second locus, there is a real potentiality to inaugurate a planned shift in mission strategy from the lower class to the urban middle strata.

2. Conducive Religious Climate. There is a conducive religious climate within the urban middle strata which stimulates a receptive re-

¹⁴Eugene A. Nida, "Culture and Church Growth," Practical Anthropology, XII:1 (January-February 1965), 28.

sponse to new religious ideas. This advantageous condition is partially a result of deep dissatisfaction with the Roman Catholic church. As a rule Colombians do not hesitate to classify themselves as Catholics; however, this does not mean they participate as responsible members of the church. Increasing numbers do not regularly attend the mass and seldom or never use the confessional which is obligatory at least once a year. Colombian Roman Catholics have been historically conditioned to obey ecclesiastical authority, respect superiors, accept dogmas without rational explanation, and subject their private opinions to the official pronouncements of the church. Among the new urban middle strata this religious authoritarianism is producing a rebellious mind rather than a submissive one.

Despite the continued presence and power of the Colombian Roman Catholic church, the urban middle strata's relationship with and commitment to the church is in transition. The urban middle elements are less inclined to look to the church for leadership, especially in those "extra-spiritual" areas on which they have traditionally depended.¹⁵ John Gillin describes the religious situation in these terms:

In the minds of many of the middle-status people, the church, if not regarded as an antiquated and expensive relic of no modern significance, is actively resented for its alleged "reactionary" position and its traditional support for the hereditary aristocracy, with its landed monopoly.¹⁶

¹⁵John J. Johnson, Political Change in Latin America (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), pp. 12-3.

¹⁶John P. Gillin, "Some Signposts For Policy," in Lyman Bryson (ed.), Social Change in Latin America (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 54.

In a forthright statement to support this view, Pat Holt states that "the church has lost its hold...on most of the middle class of Colombia, especially the men."¹⁷

There are some hopeful signs of renewal within the Roman Catholic church of Colombia. Several reform movements, such as the Golconda Priest Group, are making courageous efforts to stop the obvious slippage of interest and involvement in the church among most levels of society.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the deteriorating relationships continue between the Roman church and the urban middle strata. This fact is not to be interpreted as disinterest in religion or a move to an irreligious stance. On the contrary, Colombians of all strata are basically religious by nature. Thomas Liggett, a long-time observer of religious trends in Latin America, believes that "While there are frequent manifestations of anti-clericalism and public attacks on organized religion, the spirit of the average Latin American is one of spiritual hunger, rather than nihilism and cynicism."¹⁹ While there is some clinging to Roman Catholicism as a social property, the contemporary religious climate has produced a vacuum which opens the possibility for an alternative faith.

¹⁷Pat M. Holt, Colombia Today--And Tomorrow (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 178.

¹⁸Golcondo Priest Group, "Manifesto On The Colombian Social Order," Bogotá: El Tiempo (April 13, 1969), 1-4.

¹⁹Thomas T. Liggett, "Latin America--A Challenge to Protestantism," (Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico: Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, 1959), p. 6.

The Colombian situation is not dissimilar to the early 16th century in Europe, when a new humanism and the emergence of religious dissent created the breeding ground for the Protestant Reformation. Willems sees the present religious dissent in urban Latin America as producing a similar environment for a new receptivity to the Protestant message. Since cities are relatively free from the strictures of the traditional socio-religious order, it is comparatively easier to join a new religious group without feeling impeded by family or the social pressures of friends.²⁰

Some missiologists have concluded that the urban middle strata are not responsive to the gospel, therefore cannot be won to the Protestant faith and church. Several church growth leaders argue against a concerted effort to the middle sector because they believe this sector represents the most unchanging members of Latin American society.²¹ In sharp disagreement with this evaluation, Nida claims: "The potential for dynamic change in any urban society normally exists, not in the largely static extremes of high and low, but in the seething middle. ...the dynamic core of society is concentrated in the aspiring middle...."²²

The assessment of those advocating church growth is primarily

²⁰Willems, op. cit., p. 80.

²¹Read, op. cit., pp. 229-30.

²²Eugene A. Nida, "Dynamics of Church Growth," in Donald Anderson McGavran (ed.), Church Growth and Christian Mission (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 188-9.

based on the inability of the present "middle class" Evangelical churches to witness effectively to and win converts from their own strata. For this reason, those with church growth orientation have a strong preference for focusing principal attention on winning the poorer masses who respond more quickly to the gospel. An admission of an apparent incapability of the present urban Evangelical church to win middle strata people does not automatically imply that the new urban middle strata is therefore unresponsive or unreachable. Dayton Roberts views the situation from the perspective of a faulty approach used by most Latin American Evangelicals. He laments the impracticality of the traditional strategy of witnessing by Protestants to any strata above that of the lower classes. In addressing the problem he concludes: "We witness in traditional authoritarianism, acceptable to the semi-literate, but a psychological faux pas in our witness to the up-and-outer."²³

From a recent empirical study conducted in Bogotá, there is new evidence to suggest a genuine religious openness within the new middle strata. Germán Bravo, a Belgic sociologist, in cooperation with the Department of Investigations of the Institute of Social Development in Colombia, directed the special study. The research project was aimed toward measuring the religious values and attitudes of the 1955 high school graduating class in Bogotá, through the use of questionnaire forms and personal interviews. Two hundred individuals were chosen at random from 1,779 high school graduates. Their ages ranged approxi-

²³W. Dayton Roberts, "Witnessing 'Up,'" HIS, XXIII:9 (June 1963), 12.

mately from 28-32 years, their sexual distribution included 150 men and 50 women, and 86 percent were either urban born or of urban background.²⁴

Of critical importance was that "none of those interviewed belonged to the low classes, and none were sons of manual laborers."²⁵ A very small percentage belonged to the elite class with the remainder coming from a broad middle spectrum of urban society. Several significant findings resulted from the survey:

98 percent indicated they would invite Evangelicals into their homes.

97 percent would welcome Evangelicals into the membership of their private, professional, or civic clubs.

95 percent would permit their children to study with Evangelicals in the same school.

80 percent would allow their children to marry Evangelicals, permitting them individual liberty and freedom regarding marriage partners.

74.5 percent indicated they would not exclude from their relationships, personal friends who might be converted to another religion outside the Roman Catholic church.

64.5 percent signified a willingness to accept non-Catholic preaching and teaching because of their interest in dialogue and discussion with those sharing different religious convictions.²⁶

The final results of this new study have not yet been completed.

²⁴The Episcopal Church of Colombia, "Valores y Actitudes Religiosas de los Bachilleres Egresados en 1955 en Bogotá," Estudio sobre Permanencia de Valores Religiosos ("Religious Values and Attitudes of High School Students Graduated in 1955 in Bogotá," A Study of the Permanence of Religious Values), (Bogotá: ICODES de Colombia, 1967), 1-2.

²⁵Ibid., p. 5.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 50-3.

However, the findings permit at least two general conclusions: First, the urban middle seem to demonstrate a religious tolerance for non-Catholics and an openness to personal contact and social association with those who hold various religious convictions. Second, there is little evidence to suggest that the middle strata are hostile toward Evangelicals or closed to the Protestant message. While it is not possible to measure precisely the religious attitudes of a specific sector of society on the basis of one study, the results point in the direction of a greater receptiveness to Evangelicals and the Protestant church than has been commonly believed.

A shift from the rural to urban locus and from the mass and lower class loci toward the urban middle strata means an abandonment of stereotyped ideas and attitudes not supported by sociological data or the religious situation. The available evidence points toward the necessity for a complete reassessment of the old mission concepts and a ready disposition to investigate the new possibilities.

C. THE STRATEGIC GROUPS' LOCUS

The final locus of the situational mission strategy is centered in three urban groups: youth, women, and university students. This focus is not intended to limit Protestant attempts to reach any individual, family, or other groups in the middle strata. It does imply a conscious plan to communicate the gospel to certain persons, whose presence in the middle strata and importance in society make them primary targets for Evangelical church outreach. The situational strategy calls for special efforts to be made toward groups which play a

vital role in a growing urban society and in the development of the nation.

1. Urban Youth. Various sociologists have discovered a circumscribed age composition in most Latin American cities. Medina Echavarría and Philip Hauser report that the urban population has a smaller proportion of minors under the age of fifteen, but a larger proportion of young people between the ages of fifteen to nineteen as compared with rural population distribution. Rural Colombia possesses substantially more children; whereas, the proportion of adolescents is higher in the cities. Depending on future trends in fertility and mortality, there is a projection that by 1975, over one-half of the population in Colombian cities will be under twenty years of age.²⁷ Stanley Rycroft and Myrtle Clemmer, commenting on this strategic age group, state: "One pivotal age group on which there is crucial convergence of major economic and social consideration is that of adolescence...persons aged 15-19 years."²⁸ Many individuals in this age group are already members of the urban middle strata or will become members through more education and upward social mobility.

Some urban Evangelical churches need to face creatively the challenge of a ministry to youth in this age range. Church facilities

²⁷Medina J. Echavarría and Philip M. Hauser, "'Rapporteurs' Report," in Philip M. Hauser (ed.), Urbanization in Latin America (New York: International Documents Service, 1961), p. 30.

²⁸W. Stanley Rycroft and Myrtle M. Clemmer, A Study of Urbanization in Latin America (New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1963), p. 25.

should be utilized, church personnel mobilized, and all available resources applied to witness to and work with these youth. Within the environs of local Protestant churches, there could be programs which provide for the social and recreational needs of youth in the neighborhood. Personal and group counseling, along with referral services might assist young people in problem-solving and aid them in defining life's goals and discovering a new life style in the confusion of the city.

If the Evangelical churches demonstrate a person-centered interest in urban youth, there will be ample occasions to share the Christian faith in a natural and normal manner. The person and problem-centered approach to youth in the confines of local neighborhoods, rather than mass youth rallies or additional church services, is the strategy advocated by the situational model. The predominant presence and projected increase of the fifteen to nineteen year old age groups demand that some urban Evangelical churches plan a positive response.

2. Urban Women. Without exception there are more women than men in the cities of Latin America. There is a greater percentage of single and widowed women than single and widowed men in urban areas.²⁹ This ratio reflects the predominance of women leaving the countryside and migrating to the city. It also signifies the general emancipation of Latin American women who have been freed from many traditional social mores and are able to live and work in the cities without their

²⁹Echavarría, op. cit., pp. 28-9.

families. Rapid social change in urban areas is nowhere more convincingly attested to than in the changing status of Colombian middle strata women. Throwing off the image of child-bearer and housewife only, Colombian middle strata women in the past two decades began to vote, to enjoy employment like men, and to become more independent in terms of pursuing professional careers and choosing occupations. Helen Gillin describes the emancipation process in terms of social and political enfranchisement in which educational and vocational opportunities coupled with increased mobility help to maximize female freedom.³⁰ Of particular significance is the fact that the phenomenon of emancipation is almost exclusively confined to the women of middle strata groups. This point is supported by Rycroft and Clemmer, who on the basis of their investigations of urban women's occupations, conclude:

The emancipation of women and their changed position in society...is largely a middle-status phenomenon. Women in this new middle-class work in clerical positions or are employed as teachers, as trained nurses and hygiene experts, as physicians and lawyers, and in a variety of other callings.³¹

Greatly enhanced mobility and sociability among middle strata women present unique possibilities for the urban Protestant church to relate to these women's social and spiritual needs. Alert, local Evangelical churches could provide social, cultural, and special interest groups in which middle strata women could meet with and relate

³⁰Helen N. Gillin, "The Other Half: Women In Colombian Life," in A. Curtis Wilgus (ed.), The Caribbean (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), p. 235.

³¹Rycroft, op. cit., pp. 60-1.

to Protestant women of similar backgrounds. Women's book clubs, discussion groups, films, and special projects geared to local neighborhood needs and community concerns, would permit personal contact and communication with women of Evangelical faith. For urban women, conversation over a cup of tinto (coffee), friendship created by meeting over common concerns, and interest in the working women's world provide an alternative strategy to the traditional evangelistic or church-centered approach to winning women to Christ and the church.

Urban Evangelicals can express in action, concern, and care for the large numbers of professional, working, single, and married strata women residing in Colombian cities. Many local churches located in middle strata barrios (sectors), who possess some women of the same strata, need to study the situation and respond with concrete plans to reach this strategic group for the Evangelical faith and church.

3. University Students. Colombia has approximately 114,000 university students, the majority of whom are studying in the major cities of the Republic. Until two decades ago, university education was a realizable hope for only the sons and daughters of Colombia's elite class. Since World War II, higher education has become a predominant factor in the lives of middle strata individuals. In 1961, Robert Williamson took a random sampling of students at National University in Bogotá in order to determine their social stratification. These revealing data resulted from the survey:

<u>Social "Class"</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Upper Class (Elites)	6.7%
Upper Middle (Traditional)	7.6%
<u>Middle (New Middle)</u>	<u>80.3%</u>
Lower-Lower Middle	5.4% 32

The most significant fact is that over three-fourths of the students attending National University in 1961, belonged to the new middle strata. These social classification percentages have basically remained constant through the decade of the 1960's.

The strategic importance of middle strata university students in Colombia's present and future development is obvious. These students will dominate the leadership of the country through key teaching posts, through legal and medical professions, in fields of scientific and industrial research, and in the labor, financial, and business communities. Robert Dix accurately evaluates the university students' growing importance by concluding that "Students will continue to be important beyond their numbers because of....the need for educated persons in a rapidly growing nation."³³

Despite the students' increasing numbers and rising prominence, by and large Colombian Evangelicals have felt uncomfortable, threatened, and hostile in the presence of university students. This is particularly because of the Protestants' stereotyped myths about these

³²Robert C. Williamson, "University Students in a World of Change: A Colombian Sample," Sociology and Social Research, XLVIII:4 (July 1964), 16.

³³Robert H. Dix, Colombia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 351.

students. The myths assert that generally a university student is a radical, uninterested in serious study, a pawn of political agitators, a persecutor of professors, and antagonistic toward administrative leaders.³⁴ This typical caricature is partially true because it does portray a small percentage of Colombian students, but it is fundamentally false because it does not correctly describe the vast majority. Only a small segment embrace extremism, exclusivism, or violence. According to Rycroft, most university students "are usually staunch defenders of civil rights and freedoms as well as constitutional government, and in socio-economic affairs they are generally enlightened and progressive."³⁵ If the Protestant church desires to communicate with university students on matters of religion and faith, false myths must be exposed and the quest for higher learning encouraged and not condemned by Evangelicals.

An effective strategy to reach middle strata students with the Evangelical faith necessitates a sympathetic understanding of the religious attitudes in the contemporary student world. Many students express little concern for Christianity as propagated by Roman Catholicism. They have felt emancipated from the dogmas, the mystery, and the magic of the Roman church and lean toward humanistic idealism and social liberalism.³⁶ Generally, Colombian university students possess deep

³⁴Kalman H. Silvert, "The University Student," in John J. Johnson (ed.), Continuity and Change in Latin America (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 225.

³⁵W. Stanley Rycroft, Religion and Faith in Latin America (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), p. 130.

³⁶Ibid., p. 130.

anti-clerical attitudes; thus, most talk about God is equated with institutionalism which creates indifference and negative reactions.

Colombian Evangelicals must realize that students not only reject Roman Catholicism, but harbor negative feelings about the Protestant church. Protestant churches have created a type of "Evangelical sub-culture" (Christ-against-culture), which is distinctive from Latin culture, therefore distasteful and uncomfortable to many in the university community. The traditional institutionalized strategy of witnessing to these students within the present church structures is unacceptable in light of their present attitudes.

The situational mission strategy rejects any type of super-imposed program for reaching Colombian university students via the North American campus model. This model normally requires a hired director, the renting of a house or headquarters on or near the campus, organizational meetings, training manuals, etc. Latin American students are suspicious of efforts to enlist their participation or membership in what appears as another religious organization or institution.

A more positive strategy is for selected urban Protestant leaders to orient, train, and encourage Protestant university students to penetrate the university campus with a personal friendship, a student-to-student type Christian witness. The small but potentially powerful salt, light, and leaven strategy employed by students to students reduces the criticism of an impersonal institutionalized religious approach. Because students generally respond negatively to authoritarianism, Protestant students need instruction and guidance on

how to present the gospel in a friendly, intelligent, and non-authoritarian fashion. The student-to-student strategy of witnessing to the Christian faith will not overlook the total needs of the person: mental, emotional, and spiritual. Eric Fife and Arthur Glasser, longtime Christian student leaders, reflect this strategy to the total person by stating:

The presentation of the gospel to the student must be intelligent, but it is tragic if it is merely intellectual. Many young men and women today are not primarily concerned with ideas, per se, but are seeking for something that can meet their spiritual, intellectual, and emotional needs.³⁷

Finally, the Protestant student who builds friendships and makes contacts will welcome into his home fellow students for informal dialogue and unstructured discussions which allow for religious conversation and confrontation. Jack Voelkel, a Protestant student-professor at National University in Colombia, has discovered that university students are open and welcome opportunities for free discussion over a broad range of religious subjects along with a host of practical issues related to the meaning and purpose of life in the contemporary world.³⁸

The university world has become a religious "wasteland" for many Evangelicals and is considered "off limits" and too demanding in terms of time and effort. Despite the problems, local Protestant churches who have within their membership university students are in an

³⁷Eric Fife and Arthur Glasser, Missions in Crisis: Rethinking Missionary Strategy (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), pp. 200-01.

³⁸Jack Voelkel, "Our Struggle in the Latin Universities," Latin American Evangelist, XLIX:5 (September-October 1969), 2.

opportune position to train their students in the personal student-to-student strategy of Christian witness. Imported foreign programs imposed on the university community, however effective on North American campuses, are incompatible with the Colombian university students. A more informal and internal strategy by Protestant students allows freedom from institutional and organizational structures and permits a flexible witnessing situation on a personal friendship basis.

The three-dimensional locus of the situational mission strategy model is urban, middle strata, and strategic groups. A shift in mission strategy involves a relocation of mission emphasis from the rural locus to the urban locus. New Testament mission methodology and favorable socio-cultural conditions support such a locational shift. Several arguments against the validity of applying a socially selective strategy find little biblical or contemporary support. The social dynamics operative within a given strata must be recognized and utilized as a legitimate means of communicating the Christian gospel. The current religious climate among the urban middle strata and the new empirical evidence suggest a receptivity by this social sector to the Protestant church's message and its members. There is reason to believe that a well-planned strategy to win middle strata persons would prove fruitful for the advance of Colombian Protestantism. Because of their growing numbers and increasing importance in Colombian society, the final locus of the situational model is focused on youth, urban women, and university students. Flexible programs, personal contacts, friendship evangelism, informal groups, creative projects, sensitivity to a specific need, and a concern for the total person will permit a genu-

ine Christian witness to these groups in the normal contexts of daily life.

The situational strategy model pleads for changed attitudes on the part of most Protestant clergy and laity in order to effect a shift toward the new loci. The situational mission model, with its new loci, calls for a more flexible theological perspective in relation to the Christian message, view of the church, and the meaning of mission in the world.

CHAPTER VI

THE THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE SITUATIONAL MISSION STRATEGY MODEL

If the urban middle strata are to be reached with the Evangelical faith, most Protestants in Colombia must move beyond their current theological positions toward a more positive and flexible theological perspective. Neither the pietistic theology of Pentecostals, the individualistic theology of the traditionalists, nor the sophisticated theology of the revolutionists provides an adequate or acceptable theological base from which to communicate the gospel effectively to the urban middle strata. The theological perspective advocated by the situational model calls for revision in three critical areas: the important priorities of the message, the renewal of the church as community, and the meaning of mission in the contemporary urban world.

A. IMPORTANT PRIORITIES IN THE MESSAGE

1. From Polemic Toward Proclamation. Due to the historic conflict that existed for more than a century between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches in Colombia, there have been almost continuous polemical encounters generated by both confessions. Colombian Catholics have often accused Protestants of proselytism, disrespect for the Virgin Mary, and the disruption of national unity because of the propagation of a non-Catholic faith. Colombian Protestants, following conversion to the Evangelical faith, vocalized their intense negative feelings in denunciation of the Catholic church, its doctrines, its members, and the Pope. Relationships between these two branches of Chris-

tendom were further ruptured due to religious persecution during the years of The Violence. Therefore, Colombian Protestants have tended to lay the blame for all social evils, political corruption, and the seemingly low morals of the nation at the feet of the Roman Catholic church. In this atmosphere of suspicion and tension, the Christian message preached by Evangelicals was often vindictive in spirit and defensive in nature. Becoming an Evangelical frequently meant being anti-Catholic, thus critical and condemnatory of everything Roman Catholic.

At the beginning of 1960, a new atmosphere began to permeate the Catholic-Protestant problem in Colombia. The spirit manifested by Pope John XXIII and the rapprochement of the Vatican II Council began to have their impact on the leadership of both Catholic and Protestant churches. During the decade of the 1960's, Colombian Evangelicals began to discover that converts could be won and new churches established without engaging in anti-Catholic polemics.¹ Nevertheless, many Evangelicals retain hidden fears that the changes within Catholicism and their spirit of tolerance toward Protestants are motivated by insincerity. Thus, some prominent Protestant leaders continue a type of low-key polemic which appears in the printed page and is still heard from the pulpit.

The modern urbanite of middle status will not respond to a Christian message proclaimed in a controversial way. Dogmatic arguments, controversial preaching, and negative pronouncements against

¹John D. Martz, Colombia: A Contemporary Political Survey (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 318.

the Roman Catholic church will alienate the more educated, open-minded, and perceptive urban middle strata person. Dayton Roberts, longtime missionary in Latin America, makes a plea for a new day of positive proclamation and avoidance of the old argument:

In Latin America the day of polemics is probably past. This is an age of dialogue, mutual respect, common cause against dialectical materialism, joint Bible study. Today is a day of unparalleled opportunity among the middle and upper class of people of the continent as the new biblicism of Rome combines with other factors to open people's hearts to the message of God's Word. We must abandon our extreme polemical attitude in order to take advantage of this opportunity.²

For Colombia, a century of polemic is past and a new decade of positive proclamation is present.

Persons in the middle strata will respond to the Christian message when it is made relevant to them. First, in the city with its many voices clamoring for attention, the Christian kerygma must be proclaimed as a decisive voice and distinct word about Christ. John Taylor, a widely known missiologist, declares that the gospel is about "a Person to know and make known; not the Person only but the thing He has done."³ Proclaiming the Word by the Protestant church does not mean sermonizing or theologizing; rather, according to Douglas Webster, a renowned Anglican missionary writer, it means "the perpetual communication of Jesus Christ by the Church to the world, the perpetual interpretation of Christ, retrieving him from the misrepresentation of theological systems, the limitations of denominations, and the dis-

²W. Dayton Roberts, "Witnessing 'Up,'" HIS, XXIII:9 (June 1963), 16.

³John V. Taylor, For All The World (London: Stoughton and Hodder, 1966), p. 27.

tortion of institutional Christianity."⁴ The urban middle strata person will no longer accept a Christ who has been institutionalized, dogmatized, or denominationalized. The Protestant church's message dare not put Christ into a partial eclipse by dogmatics which serve to obscure His Lordship. It is not the pull of the church as institution which attracts individuals to the Christian faith, but the magnetism of the Person presented in a winsome and positive manner.

Second, in proclaiming the Christian message there is a need to personalize the Good News. The modern Colombian city is prime breeding ground for the depersonalization and dehumanization of life. Contemporary urban life tends to revolve around the material world which recurrently induces middle strata people into believing that the possession of things brings a sense of fulfillment to the human spirit. Rycroft and Clemmer call this tendency the "thingification" of urban society.⁵ The idol of thingification is dethroned by personalizing the gospel in terms of helping persons to change their values, perspectives, and life styles in the light of Christ's Lordship over the totality of life. The Good News personalized opens the possibility of a new life of freedom, dignity, and true humanity for the person amidst his society. Emilio Castro, outstanding Methodist leader in Latin America, elucidates this dimension of the gospel:

⁴Douglas Webster, Yes To Mission (New York: Seabury Press, 1966), p. 46.

⁵W. Stanley Rycroft and Myrtle M. Clemmer, A Study of Urbanization in Latin America (New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1963), p. 131.

In the measure in which we speak of genuine conversion to Jesus Christ, and of a person who has taken a decision that gives perspective to his whole life, we are speaking of an individual who maintains an island of humanity in the midst of dehumanizing tendencies.⁶

That God in Christ offers a person true humanity and freedom in the dehumanizing and imprisoning urban context is a priority of the Christian message to be energetically proclaimed by Evangelical messengers.

The third priority of gospel proclamation is that the Christian message be in realistic contact with the present situation. While the gospel transcends culture and the faith it engenders possesses supra-cultural dimensions, the medium of its communication and the living out of those committed to it need rootage in the genuine context of life. An effective Christian message must be translatable into the personal, community, and social life of an individual, related to his needs and experiences in daily life. Ricardo Chartier terms the process of adapting the gospel to a specific social situation the "indigenization of the message."⁷ He states that "the preaching and other forms of communicating the gospel, inside or outside the church, must contemplate and adapt to the situation."⁸

The Evangelical messenger endeavoring to communicate the gospel

⁶Emilio Castro, "Conversion and Social Transformation," in Harvey G. Cox (ed.), The Church Amid Revolution (New York: Association Press, 1967), p. 103.

⁷An "indigenized message" is the Christian gospel which is situation centered, geared to the present experiences, needs, and realities of individuals in their particular society.

⁸Ricardo A. Chartier, "El Desafío Urbano," ("The Urban Challenge"), (Buenos Aires: Methopress, 1965), 24.

to the urban middle strata must make deliberate preparations to adapt his message to the receivers' socio-cultural experiences and religious needs. The gospel made relevant within the urban situation in which the middle strata live will not insist on cultural alienation, but on personal faith and commitment with ability to accept and enjoy the good in the culture and act responsibly to change its evil. In the milieu of re-socialization many among the middle strata live with inner tensions which produce feelings of marginality and insecurity. To those in this frustrating and demoralizing situation, the themes of God's love in Christ, the meaning of grace and forgiveness, reconciliation with God and neighbor, freedom from personal and social enslavement, and the need for Christian community and commitment are some aspects of the gospel to which the middle strata urbanite will respond.

2. From Pietistic Toward Prophetic. Another essential priority to be emphasized in Christian proclamation is the prophetic dimension of the gospel. This will necessitate a shift in theological perspective from a pietistic-centered message to a more prophetic-centered one. Generally, Colombian Protestants, representing the traditional and Pentecostal traditions, tend to focus their message almost exclusively on personal piety. Evangelical converts usually experience a radical conversion which causes an abrupt break with the old religion and traditional pattern of behavior. The new life as an Evangelical believer is often characterized by individual piety with relation to his personal and social conduct.

Personal Christian piety takes on the form of a succession of negative prohibitions or moral rules which are considered the mark of

a genuine Evangelical believer. The majority of Protestant church constitutions include prohibitions against tobacco, the theater, alcohol, dancing, and the fiesta. Protestant norms are usually restrictive in terms of not permitting involvement or participation in the political, cultural, or social life of the nation. This type of "Christianity gone cultic," tends to confine the convert's life to activities within the church and confirms in his mind the idea that his citizenship is exclusively bound to the heavenly dimension.⁹ Sincere efforts are made by Evangelicals to obey the laws of conduct which demonstrate to the community the genuineness of conversion.

Because of dual pressure from the church and community this type of personal piety frequently creates great inner psychological strain and emotional tension in the lives of Colombian Evangelicals. Emilio Willems made a perceptive observation regarding Protestant pietism in Latin America. He observed that once the strict norms of piety "were recognized as 'Protestant behavior' by the vigilant and critical non-Protestant sector of a community, the congregations really had to watch their step to live up to expectations."¹⁰ As a result of close scrutiny by the Roman Catholic majority, churches of the Pentecostal and traditional denominations enforce strict disciplinary laws. Discipline of members may include: censure from the Lord's Table, re-

⁹José Míguez, "Theological Education for a Church in Transition, Viewpoint of a Latin American," International Review of Missions, XLIX:194 (April 1960), 150.

¹⁰Emilio Willems, Followers of the New Faith (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967), p. 46.

moval from church offices, and excommunication from the membership. While Protestant Christianity is to be commended for introducing the moral and ethical dimensions of the gospel in Colombia, it is also responsible for creating a type of Christian piety which is moralistic and judgmental in nature, reflecting the legalism and pharisaism condemned by Jesus and Paul.

The Evangelical messenger who continues to proclaim a negative pietism in Colombia will have difficulty in communicating Christian faith to the new urban middle strata. The traditional pietistic preaching and teaching of the majority of Evangelical churches in Colombia represent a peripheral and perverted theological perspective which is unacceptable in a mission strategy aimed at these groups. These strata, enjoying their new personal and social independence in society, will not likely respond positively to a message with excessive emphasis on external standards. Demands for a radical break with culture and retreat into the confinements of the Protestant church will meet with resistance by an urban sector which is freeing itself from the yoke of a rigid religious authoritarianism. William Wonderly and Jorge Lara-Braud, Christian anthropological writers, summarize the problem and point toward a solution. It is their judgment that traditional Protestant pietism in Latin America

...is really an emphasis upon the symbolic aspect of religion, in which certain external and secondary manifestations of Christianity are made to serve as badges or labels, without necessarily reflecting the fruits of the Spirit in a transformed life. It would seem highly important that we insist, at every level from the seminary to the Sunday School, upon a more positive emphasis on biblical and Christian ethics based upon the law of love; and that we endeavor to find an expression of the message that is oriented, not toward the rural and small-town society of a cen-

ture past nor to the society from which missionaries have come, but to the deep concerns of the Latin American himself in the situation of revolution and social change that exists in the twentieth century.¹¹

The situational mission strategy model advocates a move toward a more prophetically-oriented Christian message related to this world's needs, concerns, hopes and aspirations of the new urban middle strata persons. The prophetic proclamation speaks with equal force and candor to both personal and corporate sin, to private and social evil. Calling persons to repentance is valid, not just from outward carnality, but also from attitudes and actions that restrict personal and social freedom, peace, justice, and equality.

Evangelical messengers find it relatively easy to declare the judgment of God against personal immorality and individual vices. That God judges also corporate evil and vice, those who lust for power, all who oppress people, and those who trample under foot the hopes and aspirations of human beings is the prophetic word of judgment which the Evangelical church must proclaim.¹² Faithful proclamation of prophetic Christianity militates against the temptation of disengagement with society and culture. John Housley sees the prophetic message as "calling men to action in their culture, rather than to a place of security separated from the important movements of history."¹³

¹¹William L. Wonderly and Jorge Lara-Braud, "Some Convictions of a Young Church," Practical Anthropology XIV:1 (January-February, 1967), 14.

¹²Horace L. Fenton, "Missions and Revolution," Latin America Evangelist, XLIX:2 (March-April, 1969), 5.

¹³John B. Housley, "Review Article: Church Growth and Christian Mission," International Review of Missions, LVII:227 (July 1968), 362.

Finally, a move toward a prophetic message by the evangelists of Protestantism in Colombia, necessitates an involvement and identification with those to whom the message is directed. The church, whose strategy is to evangelize, serve, and minister to the urban middle sector, is called to identify with their concerns and interests. Christian identification is accomplished through sensitive listening, disinterested service, and in cultivating personalismo (personalism) through which Christian love and concern can be made concrete.

B. THE CHURCH AS COMMUNITY

In a day of social revolution, where the newly emerging middle strata of society are struggling with their identity against the forces of fragmentation, there is an urgent need for a theological perspective of the Christian church that goes beyond the traditional Colombian Evangelical concept. In the urban world where depersonalization is a daily reality, middle strata urbanites need to see and experience the church as a community which encourages personal integration, provides Christian koinonia, and gives meaning and purpose to life. The church as community must relate its faith, life, and mission to the three common human needs of being, or the need of selfhood, belonging, or the need of fellowship, and doing, or the need to make selfhood and fellowship relevant.

1. From Fragmentation Toward Integration. Despite improved social status and economic success, the urban middle strata in Colombia are victims of personal and social fragmentation. Urban society requires living in distinct multiple associations including, at least,

the place of work, the place of family life, and the place of leisure time. If the church is simply another place of religious association, it becomes a fourth fragment in society, rather than a community that unites and integrates the totality of life.¹⁴ The Protestant church which builds its life around the institutional pattern tends to aid the process of fragmentation already rampant in urban society. Based upon recent studies of different Protestant groups in Latin America, Willems discovered that "The Protestant congregation with its strong accent on intimate co-operation, personal responsibility, mutual as well as self-help provides opportunity for the individual whose personal community has been destroyed, to 'find himself'."¹⁵

The personalism of middle strata Colombians reacts negatively to an over-structured and strictly regimented church which serves to offend their dignity as persons and further destroys their selfhood. Whatever polity in a local church prevents the growth of the self into Christian maturity denies the person's right to be himself. Within the church community the integration of Christian faith and personal identity are inseparably related. Gibson Winter makes the point that "Faith in Jesus as the Christ is acknowledgement that Jesus discloses who I am; to be in Christ, thus, is to come to myself, to recognize myself, to come to my true identity."¹⁶ The church as community needs to dis-

¹⁴Arnold Cook, "Urban Evangelism," (Cali, Colombia: December 1968), pp. 5-6.

¹⁵Willems, op. cit., p. 123.

¹⁶Gibson Winter, The New Creation as Metropolis (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 70.

cover ways to integrate faith with every aspect of life. The Christian community must help persons face the realities of life's inescapable crises, introduce the biblical basis of stability in the midst of chaotic change, and encourage a new set of values relevant to the urban situation.

The Christian community which desires to make itself attractive to the middle strata will allow for the exercise and expression of personal freedom. Members of the urban middle strata continue to rebel against rigid indoctrination, unquestioning acceptance of authority, and submission to church laws historically inherent in the structure of the Colombian Roman Catholic church. It is clear that the same methodology utilized by Evangelical churches will be resisted and rejected by this urban sector. Freedom from strict ecclesiastical authority, freedom for all communicants to make decisions in an equalitarian way, and freedom of conscience to make private judgments reflect a church in tune with the most deeply ingrained values of the Latin American way of life.

2. From Institution Toward Koinonia. That the church is not primarily an institution but a koinonia of believers is accepted by Colombian Evangelicals in theory, but in practice is often denied. Modern urbanites see the Protestant church as an institution of refuge from the world, not as a community of Christians living in koinonia which nourishes and vitalizes all aspects of life. Urban middle people are searching for a meaningful koinonia as they endeavor to cope with their modern situation. There is a desire for a new sense of community that will provide continuity in the midst of discontinuity created by the

tension of urban life.¹⁷

Persons of the urban middle strata are presently part of a heterogeneous group, therefore, especially susceptible to feelings of social alienation. The church can become a new kind of community, a "fellowship of belonging" that reconciles and unites every human relationship. Christian koinonia implies more than friendly gatherings in a church sanctuary. Strachan challenges such a narrow concept of koinonia, when he declares:

The fellowship of Christ is rather a fellowship of disciples who follow their Lord on the road of life, who encounter and share together its problems and burdens, who accept each other regardless of race or position...who break their bread humbly together at the Lord's table and at each daily meal. It is a fellowship in the world, in service, in witness, and in suffering.¹⁸

As persons discover their common faith in Christ, they realize that belonging to Him means belonging to the church as a brother in the common life of Christian koinonia. As necessary as institutional structure is for the church, it is the church as koinonia which Protestant congregations need to practice in the urban situation as part of the mission strategy to the middle strata.

A central aspect of community life in the church needful of revision is corporate worship. In contrast with either Roman Catholic or Pentecostal-type worship, most Protestant worship services are devoid of excitement and meaning. Latin Americans possess an ascetic sense

¹⁷William R. Read, Victor M. Monterroso, and Harmon A. Johnson, Latin American Church Growth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 242.

¹⁸R. Kenneth Strachan, The Inescapable Calling (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 90.

which regards visual symbols in a religious context more important than verbal ones. Use of indigenous art, drama, music, poetry, and pageantry will enhance worship and aid the worshipper to visualize Christian faith and interpret the Christian life.¹⁹ The whole structure of worship should be related to the psychological make-up of the worshipers and to the realities of their daily lives. D. T. Niles, prominent Ceylonese churchman, believes that "Out of the stuff of common life must be fashioned the instruments of worship...worship must be indigenous--it must be the natural expression in worship of the culture and common life of the group concerned."²⁰

Finally, the place of worship is not without some importance in a culture which enjoys the beauty and grandeur of Catholic cathedrals. Despite some notable exceptions, Evangelical church buildings in Colombia are small, poorly constructed, and badly located. For most Colombians, a church building possesses religious value and cultural symbolism that cannot be ignored by Evangelicals.²¹ While the Christian church is not a building, but a community of Christ's disciples in the world, nevertheless a moderately attractive place of worship is more acceptable to those of higher social status in today's modern urban society.

¹⁹Eugene A. Nida, "Communication of the Gospel to Latin Americans," Practical Anthropology, VIII:4 (July-August 1961), 150-1.

²⁰Daniel T. Niles, Upon the Earth (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), p. 142.

²¹G. W. Peters, "Church Growth in Colombia," Evangelical Missions Quarterly, III:3 (Spring 1967), 169-70.

C. THE MEANING OF MISSION

A final area in which a more open theological perspective is required, as part of the strategy model designed to meet the needs of the urban middle strata, is the meaning of Christian mission in the contemporary world. A view of the Christian church solely as a gathered community represents a limited concept of the church. An additional dimension is the church in mission and action in the world.

Among an overwhelming number of Colombian Evangelicals the church's main role in the world is that of an evangelistic agent, calling persons out of the world into the institutional church. This type of evangelistic activism reflects a concept of Christian mission based on isolationism and pseudo-pietism that is aimed at self-perpetuation and self-aggrandizement. A corrective for this narrow theological viewpoint regarding mission is a mission concept and strategy that move beyond the church to the world, beyond selfhood to servanthood, and beyond worship to witness. A definition of Christian mission approximating the stance of the situational mission model is reflected in a statement by Kenneth Strachan. He conceives the mission of the church as "a testifying community set down in the world, not for purposes of self-seeking or self-defense, but for disinterested service and faithful witness...."²²

1. Beyond Church to World. If the Protestant church in Colombia

²²R. Kenneth Strachan, "Call to Witness," International Review of Missions, LIII:210 (April 1964), 195.

is to be active in society in the roles of servant and witness, a radical change of attitude and outlook regarding the world is essential. Colombian Protestantism is caught in the historic dilemma of rejection and withdrawal from the world or acceptance and conformity to the world. By and large, the present Evangelical churches have chosen withdrawal, viewing the world as basically evil, a place from which converts must be removed. This "Christ-against-culture" tendency has led to individualistic faith, emphasis on other-worldly concerns, a ghetto mentality, and a refuge-type church. Colombian Evangelicalism of this nature continues to gain adherents from lower class urbanites, but is irrelevant to and unrealistic for the urban middle sector. It makes little sense for the Protestant church to reject the "world" that has given to the middle strata a new social status, advanced education, and a measure of economic success.

It seems evident that either the position of withdrawal from the world or conformity to the world removes the painful, but necessary, tension between the church and culture. Historically in Christianity, there has been an unmistakable tension which continues to exist between the relationship of the eternal and temporal, the universal and local, authority and freedom, and between the church and the world.²³ For the church in every age, this creative tension involves a delicate paradox of existence, expressed in New Testament language as being in but not of the world. In spite of the tension, the church

²³Eugene L. Smith, Mandate for Mission (New York: Friendship Press, 1968), p. 73.

must face outward to the world rather than turn inward and live unto itself. Strachan, speaking about this tension, concludes that the Protestant church "must identify itself with the community in its needs and problems and in the light of God's redemptive purpose. It will therefore always find itself in tension between the command to come out from and the command to go into the world."²⁴

It is true that the church in any country or culture completely enmeshed in the world possesses no frontier from which to confront the world. It is equally true that a church which stands off or withdraws from the world loses real contact with persons and is irrelevant to their situation in society. The Christian community is called to a "holy worldliness," to be holy and worldly at the same time, which creates the appropriate tension between the church and culture. Concerning the idea of "holy worldliness," Webster observes:

Being thoroughly in the world, sharing in the world's agonies, glad of the world's progress and delights, will keep the church worldly in the proper sense. Being "children of light," "salty Christians," will keep the Church holy in the proper sense.²⁵

The Protestant church in Colombia which understands its mission only in terms of gathering converts into the church for worship, teaching, and prayer becomes a refuge for saints engaged in a rescue operation to "the lost." There is need for a centrifugal movement from the church to the world, a movement beyond the warmth and vitality of the koinonia to the cold hardness of the secular world. An Evangelical

²⁴Strachan, The Inescapable Calling, pp. 91-2.

²⁵Webster, op. cit., pp. 58-9.

church which moves into the world, exposes itself to risk, involves itself with people's needs, thus is free to serve and witness in society as God's pilgrim people. Response to the Christian faith and the Evangelical church on behalf of urban middle strata people seems more probable when Protestant congregations move beyond their churches into the world.

2. Beyond Selfhood to Servanthood. Urban middle strata persons who become committed Evangelicals and members of the church need an outlet for active Christian service in the arena of society. Over-emphasis on the "gathered church" as a fellowship of believers, or church programs organized around the spiritual, psychological, and social needs of members will tend to curb these strata's nationalistic aspirations for acting to improve conditions in society. It will also frustrate their desire to be activists instead of fatalists concerning the urgent social problems confronting the city and their country. Therefore, the mission of the church needs to be conceived in terms of diakonia which motivates Christian disciples toward doing. When Christian faith creates a new unity of the self, the meaning and purpose of the Christian life in the world becomes relevant by moving beyond concern for selfhood toward the responsibility of servanthood.

Except for those few Protestant leaders in Colombia who lean toward the revolutionary mission model, there is fear and hesitancy among the majority of Evangelical leaders to permit the laity to become involved in social action as servants of God. There are theological reasons and historic factors which have produced the present myopia concerning the lack of Christian conscience and concern for the

enormous social problems facing Colombia. Theologically, some of the reasons are: a pessimistic eschatology, a false dichotomy between the spiritual and social, emphasis on individual piety, and doctrines stressing monasticism, complete separation from the world. Historically, Colombian Evangelicals possess deeply-ingrained negative feelings about politics and believe that conformity to present social structures guarantees their security and peace as a religious minority.

In the past, foreign missionaries to Colombia reacted against theological liberalism with its "social gospel." This negative reaction was superimposed upon the thought and life of the Evangelical church. As a result of these missionary attitudes, an almost identical reaction prevails today among Colombian Protestants opposing the sociopolitical stress of those who espouse the revolutionary model of mission. This current impasse within Latin American Protestantism is expertly analyzed by Emilio Castro, who sees the tragic polarization between Evangelicals a result of those who "say that conversion and social change are two totally independent realities, the study of one belonging to theology and the other to sociology."²⁶ This dilemma cannot be solved unless there is a broader-based theological perspective in relation to the servanthood concept of the church in the world. Such a broader theological base is a central prerequisite to the deployment of the situational mission strategy in the city.

Besides a changed attitude toward the world, it is necessary to acquire a new understanding of the church as servant in the contem-

²⁶Castro, op. cit., p. 90.

porary urban situation. The older, more traditional concept of Christian service was conceived in terms of performing acts of piedad (mercy), such as: dispensing medicine to the sick, giving food to the hungry, and distributing clothing to the poor. These acts of charity were sincere efforts to respond to human need and were motivated by genuine concern, thus were a legitimate and valid expression of Christian service. However, there exists an urgent necessity to move beyond individual acts of charity to the corporate concerns of society. Colombian Protestants, individually or corporately, can be Christ's servants within political parties, labor unions, business and professional organizations, social institutions, and human rights movements. Christian servanthood practiced in these and other government, civic or community organizations, thrusts the church into the mainstream of Colombia's pressing social problems of poverty, economic feudalism, militarism, slums, alcoholism, political paternalism, governmental corruption, prostitution, social injustice, and inequitable wages and taxation. In a plea for involvement in this type of service by the church, John Taylor writes:

The service of Christian teachers or nurses or agriculturalists or social workers may be just as effectual for the Mission in a government institution [or other institutions] as in one controlled by the Church, and often very much more so. For Christians...are called again and again to cross over into another human situation, and to articulate the Gospel in terms of that situation....²⁷

The message is clear: Colombian Evangelicals cannot wash their hands of the enormous social problems facing their nation; therefore,

²⁷ Taylor, op. cit., p. 40.

the church must act as God's servant for the correction of these situations in society. Christian diakonia in the world is a visual aid par excellence of the gospel. The church's only conceivable form in society is that of kenosis, the role of the self-emptying servant, ready to wash the world's feet and prepared to be rejected and suffer. Paul, the Apostle, vividly portrays the Christian in the role of servant, when he wrote:

...in everything we do we show that we are God's servants, by enduring troubles, hardships, and difficulties with great patience. By our purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness we have shown ourselves to be God's servants; by the Holy Spirit, by our true love, by our message of truth, and by the power of God.²⁸ (Good News For Modern Man.)

If the diakonia of the servant is genuine, it will be carried out as "disinterested service." Acts of Christian service to those outside the church are not performed as "bait" to interested inquirers. If service done in the name of the gospel appears as a means of gaining converts, it becomes similar in nature to the Latin American idea of encomienda, the exchange of one kind of servitude for another.²⁹ In strong support of disinterested service as a proper biblical and theological concept, Strachan declares:

Only a genuinely disinterested service to those outside the family, a service which looks to no recompense, which is not a concealed means to an end (e.g. the acquisition of more church members), can properly reveal the love of God and the gospel of free grace. Only such service can deliver the Christian and the Christian church from the self-interest and self-centeredness that are the root of the pharisaism condemned by Christ.³⁰

²⁸II Corinthians 6:4, 6-7.

²⁹Jordan Bishop, "Numerical Growth--An Adequate Criterion of Mission?" International Review of Missions, LVII:227 (July 1968), 289.

³⁰Strachan, The Inescapable Calling, p. 74.

3. Beyond Worship to Witness. In addition to the role of servant, Christian mission in the world is the church moving beyond worship to witness. The winning of new disciples among the urban middle strata ultimately depends on the ability of Evangelical congregations to move outside their own oikos into the urban arena as a witnessing community. Little impact can be made on the new middle strata in the city when Protestant churches emphasize the centrality of worship services per se or view worship as a primary platform for evangelism.

Effective witness to the emerging middle strata demands entering into personal contact with these persons, confessing Christ to them, and making relevant the Lordship of Christ. Evangelicals who already possess middle strata status are by profession, occupation, or position in society located in key situations in which to be concrete Christian witnesses.³¹ This type of situational witness embodies the theological concept of the church in diaspora. The congregation engaged in witness to a selective social strata will make a conscious effort at strategic dispersion in order to penetrate that sector with the gospel. Witness by means of purposeful dispersion will curb the tendency of Colombian Protestants to limit their social contacts to Evangelical friends who already belong to the manifest church.

Although Colombian Protestantism has grown rapidly during the past decade, there remains a residual "minority complex" reflected by the question: "How can we, a small religious minority, make any impact upon society?" This question is indicative of a misunderstanding of the

³¹Chartier, op. cit., p. 25.

nature of a witnessing church in the world. The potential power of the church and its witnesses in society is depicted by three vivid metaphors used by the Lord: salt, light, and leaven. While commentators differ in their interpretation, there is general agreement that these metaphors describe the transforming power of the gospel as a penetrating force which produces a catalytical effect in society out of proportion to its quantity. The capacity of the witnessing church to penetrate society as light penetrates darkness; salt, food; and leaven, the loaf denotes the quality of witness rather than the quantity of witnesses.³² In Colombia the Protestant community does represent a small minority in the cities; yet the Christ-bearer functioning as salt, light, and leaven, an agent of penetration, influences society beyond normal proportions.

The church in dispersion penetrating society can witness to the gospel by word, presence, and deed. (Deed witness has already been described in terms of Christian servanthood.) Word witness is not to be confused with formal sermonizing or organized evangelistic efforts, rather implies the personal "gossiping of the gospel." Verbal witness involves the confession of Jesus as Savior and acknowledgement of Christ as Lord in the hope of pointing persons to faith and new life in Him. To middle strata persons, verbal witness means sharing the gospel in an intelligent and meaningful way which corresponds to the reality of their needs. Word witness dislocated from their urban lives is the proclamation of Christ in a vacuum. Strachan

³²Webster, op. cit., pp. 56-8.

states that today's situation "demands of the Christian a message that is relevant, a genuine involvement with men and women in their deepest needs, totally apart from what they may ultimately contribute to the church--in short, a witness in depth."³³

Personal and/or corporate witness by the church in diaspora may also include the non-verbal dimension of Christian presence. Especially among those of higher social status in urban Colombia, Evangelicals need to practice the art of presence witness which is concerned with the genuine demonstration of Christian faith lived, not only spoken. In word witness, the believer verbally proclaims that in Christ the new age has come; in presence witness, he proves that good news by living a new kind of life. Presence witness is more than confronting persons with the claims of Christ but involves living the gospel as Christian disciples in the concrete situations of life.

To recapitulate, theological perspectives are of pivotal importance in the situational strategy model designed for persons of the urban middle strata. Polemics and a legalistic pietism erect serious barriers in communicating the gospel in the urban context. Only a Christian message which is presented in a positive, personal, and prophetic way, emphasizing the totality of both private and corporate life in society, will stimulate receptivity among members of the middle strata. A congregation employing the situational model will move toward integrating personal faith with urban life through the expression of selfhood and the exercise of responsible personal freedom. The

³³Strachan, The Inescapable Calling, p. 70.

Protestant churches which resist old institutional patterns and paternalistic politics, stressing the concept of church as the Christian community, will attract middle sector people. The practice of koinonia will incorporate persons suffering from social dislocation into the life of the church, giving them a new sense of belonging.

A more open stance and attitude toward the world will help curb the tendency of Colombian Protestants to withdraw into ecclesiastical enclaves separated from the world. Church activities and programs directed primarily toward the needs of the personal self or the in-group, produce an introverted people. A church turned in stifles her missionary task as servant to and witness in the world. The scattered church, serving and witnessing in the affairs of society as salt, light, and leaven, will make a significant impact upon the urban middle strata. Moving beyond the perimeters of worship to witness by means of dispersion, penetrating society with the gospel through deed, word, and presence witness is the church actively engaged in mission in the world.

These perspectives provide the theological base from which to move beyond the present mission strategies utilized by the vast majority of Protestants in Colombia. If these theological perspectives are taken seriously and put into practice, there will need to be changes made in mission methodology. There are strategic areas involving a definite shift in methodology which is essential in the effective deployment of the situational mission strategy model geared to urban middle strata people.

CHAPTER VII

THE METHODOLOGY OF THE SITUATIONAL MISSION STRATEGY MODEL

Deployment of a situational mission strategy demands a methodology tailored to the urban situation and designed for the needs of the middle strata. Situational methodology implies modifications in conventional mission patterns and alterations of traditional church forms to suit today's socio-cultural conditions in urban Colombia. As was indicated in the introductory statement, the methodology proposed concerns general guidelines rather than a precise operational blueprint. These flexible guidelines are intended to point toward the necessity of several basic changes in the preparation and training for urban ministry, to suggest a movement toward innovative church forms, and to call for efforts toward stimulating a new Protestant unity.

A. TOWARD AN URBAN MINISTRY

For more than a century, the Evangelical churches in Colombia have basically trained leaders for Christian ministry according to rural patterns. The traditional rural model of ministry will not fit the urban situation. Contemporary urbanism challenges the Protestant church to change its concept of ministry from that which reflects rural mentality to one that accepts urban reality.

1. From Rural Mentality Toward Urban Reality. The initial step in implementing the situational methodology is focused on a basic change of attitude by Evangelical pastors and people toward the city. Urban churches must learn to accept and face the city as a fact of the

modern age. Ricardo Chartier believes such an attitudinal change is essential on the part of the Protestant ministry because "the church has not realized the significance of the phenomenon of urbanization. The church has not deliberately confronted the actual urban situation."¹ An acceptance of the urbanizing revolution, the emergence of new social structures, new behavioral patterns, and new life styles is an important prerequisite to a sympathetic understanding of city life. A Protestant ministry that clings to an agrarian mission model will find it impossible to utilize an urban methodology designed for those of the middle strata.

It is an arduous task for many Evangelical ministers to comprehend clearly the modern urbanite because of traditional ministerial training mainly geared for rural people. For the minister with rural mentality, the urban man becomes a stereotyped figure, an imaginary person living in an unfamiliar society. If city churches are going to confront the urban middle strata man with the gospel and minister to his needs, they must get an accurate picture of who he is and accept him as he is in his situation. Kenneth Strachan gives several clues as to methods by which a city congregation can obtain a more factual portrait of the urban man, his situation, and problems. He suggests plunging a particular congregation into an in-depth study-exposure program of urban life:

...so that they begin to see the needs and opportunities around them with their own eyes, and become exercised and concerned in the search for ways to respond. Group studies

¹Ricardo A. Chartier, "El Desafío Urbano," ("The Urban Challenge"), (Buenos Aires: Methopress, 1965), 7.

of the problem may be organized as one step....Surveys may be initiated, not with the view to seeking out prospective members for the church but rather to secure an exact picture of the strategic areas of problems and needs in the community, as well as to assess the church's capability toward meeting that need.²

The information gathered is not used to manipulate the urbanite, but to understand the facts and forces operative on him in the urban arena. A Christian ministry sensitized to the city and accepting the city dweller will unlock the possibility of applying a methodology relevant to the urban reality.

Responding to an accurate picture of the city means a new type of training for urban ministry, both for clergy and laity. First, the training of Protestant pastors will necessitate experience-exposure education in addition to academic preparation. Training institutions, either the stationary-institutional type or the mobile-decentralized type, must make pastors aware of the major forces in the city that shape urban life.³ Second, training for the laity involves each congregation's developing its own curriculum program which prepares it for various ministries in its station in society and/or in a specific barrio in the city. Emphasis on a study of urbanization, the dynamics of re-socialization, and the role of church in response to these phenomena will result in a new understanding of the urban reality. Acceptance of and orientation to the urban scene concomitant with training for Chris-

²R. Kenneth Strachan, The Inescapable Calling (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), p. 86.

³Advisory Study Committee, "An Advisory Study" (New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1961), p. 35.

tian ministry in the city are key elements in developing the situational mission strategy methodology.

2. From Protestant "Priest" Toward Mobilizer. A problem confronting the shaping of a new urban ministry is the image and role of the Evangelical minister as an authoritarian-priestly figure. All Pentecostal and most traditional groups have incorporated into their image of a minister a deeply imbedded Latin value, namely, that leaders, political or religious, must possess a strong personality. The life of many Colombian Protestant congregations is built around a dynamic, charismatic, and authoritarian-type pastor, who charms his followers by his personality or profoundly influences his hearers with elegant rhetoric. According to Eugene Nida, most Evangelical pastors in Latin America "reflect the strong tendency to caudillismo (domination by a strong personality) typical of Latin social institutions."⁴ The spirit of the parochial Catholic priest, who functioned as the religious and moral authority in rural and small town Colombia, continues to be felt as an Evangelical clericalism. Edward Murphy states that the Colombian Protestants "catch this spirit and become accustomed to an evangelical clericalism with paid pastors doing the work for which they have been hired, the work of the ministry."⁵ The Protestant minister cast in the role of a priestly-authoritarian figure

⁴Eugene A. Nida, "Culture and Church Growth," Practical Anthropology, XII:1 (January-February 1965), 34.

⁵Edward F. Murphy, "How a Dead Church Came to Life," Evangelical Missions Quarterly, VI:1 (Fall 1969), 44.

stifles participation in the church and supresses lay ministries. The shaping of the church's structures, its mission, and ministry around a man's personality and charisma will become less and less acceptable to the more independent, educated, and intelligent persons of a higher urban social status.

One antidote for Evangelical clericalism is a stronger emphasis on the role of the minister as mobilizer, rather than as evangelist or preacher. A pastor as mobilizer is called to enable, equip, and guide Christian disciples in their mission of witness, action, and service in the world. Evangelical city pastors need to be re-orientated as strategists and mobilizers of the church which is the agent of mission. On this crucial point, José Míguez conceives of the urban minister in Latin America as a person "who distributes his people, teaches and orientates them, inspires and impels them and carries them out with him to the `street.'"⁶

Colombian Evangelical churchmen need to see the serious error of believing that all the gifts of ministry can be embodied in a single pastor. A pastor-centered church not only places the total burden on one individual, but more tragically, excludes from the Christian ministry church members whom God has gifted. In the role of mobilizer, the pastor attempts to recognize and utilize all the gifts which members possess for ministry and mission in the city. George Webber, a prominent city churchman, encourages the minister in mobilizing the

⁶José Míguez, "Theological Education for a Church in Transition, Viewpoint of a Latin American," International Review of Missions, XLIX:194 (April 1960), 149.

laity:

It is the laity, living and involved in the world, on whom Christ's basic ministry of witness and service devolves. They are the "frozen" assets of the church, already present in the world, who must be thawed out and set about their rightful business right where they already are.⁷

In the city of Neiva, Colombia, Manuel Casteñeda, a non-Pentecostal pastor serving a traditional-type church, reorganized a small congregation around the ministry of the laity. Seven members of the church council became co-pastors and every adult member was assigned a definite responsibility in one or more areas of the church's ministry. Eight departments of outreach and extension were established in several responsive barrios of the city. Within eighteen months the membership increased two hundred percent and the impact of the church's service and witness was felt in several barrios. Because a minister became a mobilizer, new life and vision came to a church that for twenty-five years had suffered from relative non-growth and stagnation.⁸ This type of laity-centered methodology for urban ministry is indispensable for an effective mission strategy to and with the urban middle strata.

A second antidote against clericalism is adequate training, orientation, and preparation of Protestant ministers for the role of mobilizer. The widespread inability of Protestant ministers in urban areas to mobilize the congregation for evangelism, witness, and service is in part due to a lack of orientation in specialized urban

⁷George W. Webber, The Congregation in Mission (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 63.

⁸Murphy, op. cit., pp. 42-6.

ministries. This urgent need requires that the present theological seminaries and Bible institutes in Colombia restructure their programs to include special training for urban ministry. Along with biblical, theological, and historical studies must emerge a new focus on a broad knowledge of the city, its social structures, webs of relationships, and socio-cultural cross currents. An urban ministry calls for the pastor to be trained in Christian social ethics related to the problems of society and in his responsibility to enlist the laity in social action. In the early years of the past decade of the 1960's, James Emery called for training institutions to provide pastors with courses in the socio-cultural matrix of Colombia, including studies in anthropology, sociology, and culture, with special emphasis on urbanization and industrialization.⁹ In addition, courses on organizing congregations for mission, developing vocational witness, strategy in evangelizing selective social strata, and approaches to specialized ministries are important areas in contemporary ministerial training programs for urban ministry.

A balance between the biblical-theological content, genuine Christian experience, and an exposure knowledge of the city is crucial for urban ministers. Míguez feels the modern urban pastor "must have enough knowledge of the 'secular sciences' of society to be able to see and analyze the issues, and enough knowledge of the meaning of the Christian faith to be able to relate it to the situation."¹⁰ If the

⁹James Emery, "The Preparation of Leaders in a Ladino-Indian Church," Practical Anthropology, X:3 (May-June 1963), 132-3.

¹⁰Míguez, op. cit., p. 151.

present institutions for ministerial training cannot provide a curriculum to meet the pressing urgency of training urban pastors, perhaps a training center in cooperation with existing schools can be created to facilitate those who wish specialized orientation for urban ministry.

B. TOWARD SOME NEW FORMS

The Colombian Protestant church located in the midst of a dynamic society and confronted by rapid social change needs a variety of forms to reach the urban middle strata effectively. There are two primary areas in which a situational methodology is strategic: evangelism and church structures. Situational mission strategy points to the possibility of moving beyond mass evangelism to lay evangelism and beyond centralized churches to cell-action groups.

1. Beyond Mass Evangelism to Lay Evangelism. Mass evangelism, concentrated in stadiums, arenas parks, and on streets continues to enjoy success in Latin America in terms of attracting large crowds and recording thousands of individual inquiries into the Christian faith. In Colombia where Protestantism represents a small minority of the total population, the significance of Evangelical churches uniting for a mass evangelistic effort on a city-wide, regional, or national basis has merit. However, mass evangelism is a stop-gap method of communicating the gospel on which local congregations in urban areas dare not depend for a continual evangelistic outreach. Evangelistic meetings even in local churches are limited because too few non-believers will enter such a service to hear an evangelist or respond to his message. Emilio Castro analyzes the danger of dependence on mass evangelism and

professional evangelists by the Protestant church as reliance on a means to "help us to do consciously that which, in a profounder sense, should be our daily activity. And like all remedies, they contain the inherent danger that we may become accustomed to their presence and lose sight of true normality."¹¹ True normality means that Colombian lay believers are the indispensable evangelistic communicators of the gospel in every station of life. In life's concrete situations the lay evangelist has no sanctuary, no captive audience, no religious setting, but is on common ground with persons in their everyday world.

Lay evangelism in the city to various sectors of society demands a planned effort by Evangelical leaders to motivate and mobilize church members for evangelistic tasks. Despite those who claim witnessing to neighbors, friends, and associates is an automatic response of one committed to Christ, the laity as evangelists needs careful training and preparation. Some methodology advocated by the Evangelism-In-Depth movement gives valuable clues to the "how" of personal evangelism.¹² Orientation on ways to relate to the needs of the total person in friendship, concern, and dignity is an important factor in order to check the commonplace tendency of Evangelicals to consider individuals as only "souls" to be saved.

Personal lay evangelism in the form of dialogue rather than mere pronouncement can be a particularly relevant method with those of

¹¹Emilio Castro, "Evangelism in Latin America," International Review of Missions, LIII:212 (October 1964), 445.

¹²W. Dayton Roberts, Revolution in Evangelism (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), pp. 94-100.

differing religious backgrounds. Dialogue evangelism does not require a weakening of commitment to Evangelical beliefs, but does require the humble admission that each may have something to learn from the other person. This attitude allows for better understanding of another's belief and also permits the sharing of one's own faith in Christ in good conscience.¹³ Dialogue evangelism may be especially effective among the urban middle strata because the Evangelical believer can relate to them in terms of common religious interest and concerns.

Focus on lay evangelism instead of mass evangelism enables the church to become a center for training people to go out with the message and not a corral into which church members drive or entice non-believers.¹⁴ The church using new evangelistic forms will program ample time and provide adequate resources for the preparation of the laity as communicators of the gospel. It is the laity, scattered in modern urban society in occupational, professional, cultural, and community groups, who is in a most advantageous position to make a distinct and dignified evangelistic witness through their daily channels of personal contact.

2. Beyond Centralized Churches to Cell-Action Groups. Because Evangelical faith entered Colombia through Anglo-American ecclesiastical patterns and forms, the centralized model of church life is re-

¹³Jack F. Shepherd, "The Missionary Objective: Total World Evangelization," in Norman A. Horner (ed.), Protestant Crosscurrents In Mission (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 129.

¹⁴Roberts, op. cit., p. 105.

lated to a location and a building. Colombian Protestants have generally tended to identify the church as templo (building) or place, instead of iglesia (church) or the people of God. Therefore, the focus of faith has been centralized in a building at a specific location resulting in the inclination to equate faith with institutional forms. Too much accent on the centralized church will increase the difficulty in meeting the diversified needs of its members and in fulfilling its mission in the world. Many congregational forms utilized in the city context presuppose a rural concept of community as a compact and cohesive social unity. In a rapidly changing pluralistic urban society, the urban church is no longer the center of natural communities because of a multiplicity of associational relationships within various social strata. In the light of this reality, a new look must be taken at the concept of concentrating most of Christian faith and life in the forms and structures of a centralized church. Chartier calls for a critical re-examination of all urban Protestant churches in Latin America regarding this traditional concept.

It is indispensable that we examine our structures to see if we are really responding to the new social situation and changing needs of its members. The new sociological factors demand that we seek forms and structures that are more in harmony with the new situation and that permits the internal life of the "gathered church" to be more rich and pertinent to the real needs of its members.¹⁵

Such an examination of church structures would raise a host of serious questions, some of which might include: Is the sole time for worship Sunday morning? Is the present Sunday School system necessary? Are

¹⁵Chartier, op. cit., p. 24.

the traditional patterns of church life meaningful to urbanites? What new indigenous forms in terms of Latin music, art, and drama could be incorporated into the church's life? Must all programs and activities transpire in the church building? Can the church be de-centralized and continue to fulfill its function and mission in the world?

As a concrete answer to the final question, the situational mission strategy methodology advocates that some of the church's functions and activities ought to be de-centralized and re-structured into the creation of cell-action groups via the church-in-the-house model. Cell-action groups for those of middle social status can be organized around several foci: common neighborhood ties, occupational similarities, professional interests, and around an action program or project. Small cell-action groups developed outside the church's geographic perimeter is a new form in which the laity can study the Bible and theology informally, pray and dialogue together, share and fellowship intimately, which foster in-depth spiritual growth and Christian maturity. Such groups stimulate discussion and reflection on common problems, motivate the need for mutual support and concern for each other, and in a familiar Latin family-type situation re-create new face-to-face relationships desperately needed in the midst of the de-personalization of the city. Cell-action groups can be task oriented through planning programs and concrete projects of witness and service in the immediate neighborhood and/or in the broader arenas of daily association. These groups would retain a vital relationship to the central church in terms of membership, corporate worship, stewardship responsibilities, etc. However, the cell-action groups are free to

develop new ministries outside the framework of the institutional church structures.

The cell-action church-in-the-house, operational in urban middle strata barrios is especially effective as an instrument of evangelistic contact and provides a broad base for the establishment of new congregations. Roger Greenway, missionary in Mexico City, has discovered that Protestant simpatizantes (sympathizers) who are hesitant to attend a regular Evangelical church will attend a cell group in his neighborhood. He reports that through a program of establishing neighborhood churches in strategic areas of the city, many non-believers were attracted and won to the Evangelical faith.¹⁶ A new Mennonite church was recently established in Bogotá through the methodology of weekly cell group meetings in the homes of a small nucleus of believers who invited their family, friends, and neighbors.

Neither the inward pull nor outward thrust of the church has to be centralized in a building in one geographic location. A better strategy for urban Evangelicals in Colombia is in partial de-centralization of the church's forms and structures. This methodology will help de-clericalize the image of the Evangelical church and re-catholicize the role of the Christian laity. The Protestant churches through cell-action groups located in houses and apartments in the city are a concrete expression of one new form which can be used to make Chris-

¹⁶Roger S. Greenway, "Planting Neighborhood Churches in Latin American Cities" (Mexico City: Instituto Cristiano Mexicano November 1969), pp. 13-5.

tian faith and life, witness and service, more meaningful in the urban situation.

C. TOWARD A NEW PROTESTANT UNITY

No mission strategy methodology employed by the Colombian Protestant church can have an enduring impact on the contemporary urban society without a manifest spirit of unity. While Christian unity has its base in the biblical-theological context, it is also closely related to mission methodology. The suggestive methodology of the situational mission strategy is of little value if there is a basic disunity among urban churches regarding a disdain for comity agreements, a competitive spirit, and division by sectarianism and separatism. Not all churches must pursue the identical mission strategy; however, mutual respect and cooperative conduct will cement relationships between various groups which are an important factor in overall mission strategy. Protestant unity is an especially crucial issue in Colombia because the Colombians have been schooled in the imposing external unity of the Roman Catholic church. Therefore, they do not look sympathetically upon Protestantism because of its external proliferations and internal divisions.

1. From Past Unity Toward the Present Disunity. In historical retrospect, the concern for Protestant unity in Colombia was not a preoccupation of either foreign missionaries nor national church leaders until the decade of the 1930's. At that time as foreign mission bodies and denominations began to increase, some form of unity was neces-

sary relative to cooperative efforts and comity agreements. From the middle of the 1930's until 1940 there were a series of unity conferences held in which all Evangelical groups discussed the desirability of forming a united National Evangelical Church in Colombia. On August 8, 1939, at a special conference of all Evangelical bodies, the Colombian church leaders were in accord that Protestant missions and churches ought to express their unity in the forming of "one united Colombian Evangelical Church."¹⁷ The foreign missionaries gave verbal assent to the idea, but vetoed the Colombians' request with the rationale that "to do away with the different groups is impossible because of the different Boards which send the missionaries...."¹⁸ The Colombian leaders were overruled and the attempt at organic unity was defeated.

Protestant leaders continued to meet between 1940 and 1950 for periods of inspiration, fellowship, prayer, and Bible study. Some comity agreements were worked out and a general spirit of mutual respect, cooperation, and harmony prevailed among Evangelical church and mission groups. In June of 1950, the Confederación Evangélica de Colombia--CEDEC (The Evangelical Confederation of Colombia) was organized in Bogotá. This cooperative body after its inception included almost one hundred percent of Colombian Protestantism but today represents about ninety percent of the churches and missions. The objec-

¹⁷Allen D. Clark, "Tentative History of the Colombia Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.," (New York: United Presbyterian Mission Library), pp. 111-2.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 112.

tive of CEDEC is to manifest spiritual unity with the Protestant community, promote cooperation among various groups, coordinate mission and church endeavors, and present a united voice before the public authorities in the defense of religious liberty.¹⁹

From 1950 until the end of The Violence in 1958, CEDEC proved a valuable organization in which Protestants expressed their oneness and manifested their unity under the constant threat of religious persecution. Perhaps at no other time in the history of Colombian Protestantism was the spirit of unity felt more deeply. Following this period and through the lessening of tensions between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, rapid numerical growth characterized the period from 1960 to the present. However, some of the old suspicion and distrust which lay dormant during The Violence began to reappear creating problems between denominations, missions, local churches, and individual church leaders. Despite the demonstration of unity during the Evangelism-In-Depth effort in 1968, there remains below the surface a residual disunity of dangerous proportions.

If a new day of unity is to dawn among Colombian Evangelicals, an honest exposure of the fundamental obstacles hindering Protestant solidarity is important. There are at least four major obstacles which create the present Protestant disunity. First, is an excessive individualism often reflected by the selfish spirit of church leaders who de-

¹⁹James E. Goff, "The Persecution of Protestant Christians in Colombia, 1948 to 1958, With An Investigation of Its Background and Causes," (San Anselmo, California: San Francisco Theological Seminary, April 1965), pp. 45-6.

sire personal power and prestige. A second obstacle is narrow denominationalism which is more interested in the perpetuation of a mission society or an association of churches than the welfare of the corporate national church. The third obstacle is a rigid confessionalism that emphasizes precise doctrinal purity and correctness. This type of confessionalism produces a sectarian spirit that tends to exaggerate minor theological differences. The final obstacle is the practice of proselytism. This may take the form of undue evangelistic pressure on those outside the church or may appear as "sheep stealing" inside the church by subtle persuasion as to the merits of one church against another or the popularity of one pastor over another.

These long-standing obstacles to Protestant unity that are again observable in Colombia are surfacing in contemporary forms. Dayton Roberts observes throughout Latin American Protestantism a widening gulf of disunity polarizing between "evangelicals" and "ecumenicals," "right-wing" conservatives and "left-wing" revolutionists, and between those engaged in evangelism and those involved in social action.²⁰ These polarizing tendencies are clearly evident in Colombian Protestantism and are creating further internal divisions and causing more proliferation of Evangelical groups. The old obstacles together with their newer manifestations are producing a spirit of disunion resulting in competition and separatism.

2. From Present Disunity Toward a New Future Unity. Future unity

²⁰W. Dayton Roberts, "Latin American Protestants: Which Way Will They Go?" Christianity Today, XIV:1 (October 10, 1969), 14-5.

is dependent upon a renewal of concrete efforts in good faith by Colombian Protestants to move from competition toward new forms of cooperation and from separatism toward new patterns of union. Nothing is more destructive of the mission of the Protestant church in Colombia as its careless toleration of the competitive spirit in areas of evangelism, church planting, witness, and service. No responsible Evangelical can approve of "Christian cannibalism" between churches. Concerning this problem Arthur Glasser concludes:

The competitive spirit that causes the leader of each new movement to downgrade those whom he regards as his competitors erects barriers and furthers the division of Jesus Christ. If we compete among ourselves we succeed only in producing new groupings whose raison d'être rapidly passes when the next generation takes over.²¹

Instead of competitive unilateral approaches to the church's mission, there can be multilateral efforts through cooperation to meet more adequately the needs of different social classes, especially in the urban setting. The Evangelism-In-Depth movement in Colombia was a concrete example of cooperative evangelism which cut across denominational lines and included a wide spectrum of theological conviction. The churches who participated in Evangelism-In-Depth experienced a new sense of unity in proclaiming one Lord, one faith, and one hope.

Effective mission strategy to any sector of urban society cannot be sustained for any length of time on a competitive basis. Those particular churches in the city with the potential to reach the urban middle strata must band together in mission strategy, methodology, and

²¹Arthur F. Glasser, "Confession, Church Growth, and Authentic Unity in Missionary Strategy," in Horner, op. cit., p. 201.

action. This type of unity in mission is normal; separate action is abnormal and unpractical in the city. Urban Evangelical churches ought to pursue intercongregational and interchurch contacts for the purpose of planning collective activities and corporate witness. Some organized togetherness will encourage fellowship, the exchange of ideas, mutual understanding, and a feeling of oneness. Joint services of prayer, the pooling of personnel and material resources, common study, and corporate worship on special occasions give opportunity for the Evangelical churches to express their essential oneness and prepare themselves for united mission strategy. Kenneth Strachan voices the need for cooperation among Protestants in declaring:

The urgency of the times and the immensity of the task cry out to us to forsake our costly, overlapping, conflicting, and competitive, independent ways of operation, and to determine to work together, lovingly ²²respecting our difference of conviction and variety of gifts....

A new Protestant joint effort is a realizable hope if separatism among Evangelical groups can be abolished. Spiritual pride in the form of denominational idolatry or doctrinal uniformity creates deep gulfs between individual believers and drives churches into a separatist stance. Separatism disallows the possibility of some form of organic Protestant unity and destroys the fundamental spiritual unity of the church. Roland Allen, a pioneer mission strategist, concludes that there is "no such thing as spiritual unity expressed in outward separation.... Outward opposition is a certain sign that spiritual unity does

²²R. Kenneth Strachan, "Tomorrow's Task in Latin America," Christianity Today, III:6 (December 22, 1958), 6.

not exist."²³

Groups in Colombia that practice separatism tend to confuse unity with uniformity and synonymize unity with the modern ecumenical movements. Uniformity of doctrine, ritual, or church structures is neither the essence of the gospel nor the church. Christ is the central point of Christian unity which permits unity within diversity in the life of the church. Unity in diversity within the household of faith opens the possibility of urban Evangelical churches to attempt a unified mission strategy and methodology. Colombian Evangelicals need to understand that ecumenicity in terms of a central organization or in the sense of modern churchmanship is not identical with Christian unity. William Smalley, Protestant anthropologist, attempts to define the distinction from a sociological perspective when he states:

Actual unity is expressed in terms of communication channels, of avenues of genuine interaction between people on things that are important to them, where it counts. Unity, to use a Biblical term, is based on fellowship. It doesn't come by removing the organizational differences which reflect the inevitable social gatherings of people. It comes through the bridges of communication between those groups, and from a common allegiance which transcends those groups.²⁴

Unity comes from a common allegiance to Jesus Christ not by belonging to an organized ecumenical movement, confederation, or association of churches.

The future of Protestant unity in Colombia will be experienced

²³Roland Allen, Missionary Methods (London: Scott, 1912), p. 171.

²⁴William A. Smalley, "A Case of Unity, if not Ecumenicity," Practical Anthropology, IX:4 (July-August 1962), 188.

through open relationships between believers, mutual allegiance to the Lord of the church, and a common mission to communicate the gospel, not as a result of one streamlined and centralized ecumenical organization. At present, the Confederation of Evangelicals has decided not to join any ecumenical group formally; however, this should not prevent churches from demonstrating a willingness to share and fellowship with continental and international ecumenical bodies.

This final chapter pointed toward some suggestions for the situational mission strategy methodology. Since it is impossible to "put new wine into old wineskins" the older mission methodologies which reflected a rural mind set must be replaced with a contemporary methodology that is capable of confronting the new urban situation. A basic change of attitude toward the city and an acceptance of the city dweller by Protestant pastors and people are foundational. Urban Evangelical ministers must be informed and oriented through planned experience-exposure and courses of study concerning the forces operative in the urban arena. The feudalistic image of the pastor as an authoritarian-priestly figure which tends to create a Protestant clericalism is unacceptable for most middle strata urbanites. Training the urban pastor as a mobilizer and strategist which enables him to motivate local congregations to carry out their ministry is the new image espoused by the situational methodology. Emphasis on the ministries of the laity mobilized for evangelism, witness, and service in the city is a corrective for the outmoded priestly image and clerical role of Protestant church leaders.

New life in the church and a renewal of mission is possible

through the experimentation of new forms and patterns needed for effective urban mission strategy. Focus on one-to-one evangelism in the context of a Colombian believer's occupational, recreational, or professional life will remove the church's dependency on mass evangelism as the best or only method of proclaiming Christian faith. Preparation in dialogue evangelism will help church members to speak for their faith with integrity and conviction, yet with sensitive understanding for the religious beliefs of others.

Focusing Christian faith and life outside the framework of a centralized church building calls for some de-centralization of present church forms and structures. Cell-action groups meeting in homes allow for personal and creative participation in Christian fellowship, witness, and service. A manifest spirit of Protestant unity is an important aspect of situational methodology. In the past, Evangelical unity in Colombia was realized in great measure because of the presence of a strong opposing religious force. Present and future Protestant unity will depend on positive cooperation, mutual respect, and common purpose in mission, not on negative factors. Competitiveness and separationism between Protestant churches erect obstacles to Christian solidarity causing division in corporate mission efforts. Some form of concrete Protestant unity at the grass-roots level is an essential part of an effective mission strategy methodology.

The methodology of the situational mission strategy model to the emerging urban middle strata is considerably more difficult to deploy than most of the conventional methods. A more complex methodology requires careful study, concentrated planning, and special training on

the part of Protestant churches to meet the more complex spiritual and social needs of the urban middle strata. Of greater importance, situational methodology demands a new kind of commitment to risk the hazards of failure which are present in any attempt to try a new mission strategy. Nevertheless, the present urban situation and the presence of the newly emerging middle strata in Colombia ought to challenge some of the urban Protestant churches to try the new methodology through a conscious and concerted effort.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary situation in Colombia clearly indicates that urban Protestant churches must begin to concentrate their activities toward reaching the newly emerging middle strata person with the Christian gospel. Protestant mission in the city must cease being an enterprise without a planned strategy or sense of priority. There is an urgent need for creative strategy based on the present realities, the courage and vision to reject outmoded methods, and the ability to pioneer fresh approaches in the new urban frontier. If the merging urban middle strata remain untouched by the gospel in the decade of the 1970's, it will be the result of pursuing a wrong set of priorities, concentrating on the wrong places at inopportune times, but more seriously, it will demonstrate the inability to develop and deploy a mission strategy geared to the present situation. If Colombian Protestants fail to move toward a situational mission strategy, the crucial urban middle strata may become Colombia's greatest religious "drop outs."

In reality the situational mission strategy model is a call to action. It is a call to urban Evangelical churches in Colombia not to be content with present church structures, forms, and methods, but to develop new ones. It is a call to reject being satisfied with numerical church growth only from basically one sector of urban society, but to focus on another sector also. It is a call to move from a comfortable pietism and withdrawal from the world to involvement and confrontation with personal and corporate evil in society. It is a call to move beyond the present strategies in mission to a situational mis-

sion strategy concerned with persons representing a new strata of urban society whose size and influence will become great in the life of the Republic of Colombia.

In a day of dehumanizing and depersonalizing tendencies to which Colombian urbanites are particularly susceptible, there is deep need for the church to communicate in word and act the Christian message of love, reconciliation, belonging, fellowship, and freedom. Nowhere can this message be more relevant than to persons of the urban middle strata. These new strata of society will be receptive to a dynamic faith that not only transforms them spiritually and meets their needs, but sends them into society as Christians to challenge its evils and injustices through the concerted action and penetrating influence of the church of Jesus Christ.

SUMMARY

The thesis has analyzed and presented a composite picture of the contemporary socio-cultural and religious situation as it exists in Colombia, South America. This picture of rapid social change calls for some urban Protestant churches to develop and deploy a new mission strategy specifically tailored to the new situation.

As a brief background to the contemporary Colombian scene, Colombia's cultural and religious history was traced. The Republic's traditional socio-cultural heritage has been dominated by Spanish colonialism and the Roman Catholic religion. During the post-World War II era, urbanization with its concomitant phenomena of industrialization and modernization began to provide the major catalyst for rapid and radical change from the traditional rural patterns to new modern urban ones. The thesis has outlined the basic reasons for and the effects of urbanization on the social, cultural, and religious life of urban Colombians.

One of the most important changes created by urbanization has been the emergence of the new urban middle strata which have forced apart the traditional elite-peasant social structure. These new urban middle strata persons are rejecting the agrarian-based forms of behavior and are developing new styles of life and thought in accord with the mode of modernity in the urban-industrial society. They are acquiring a new set of social values which tends to create inner tension and some sense of marginality, but at the same time, they are discovering a sense of personal freedom and independence as a result of the breakdown of paternalistic patterns.

Attention then turned to the Protestant churches' response to the rapidly changing urban world and the emergence of new social strata in terms of mission strategy. Generally Protestantism continues to utilize three primary mission strategies: the Pentecostal model, the traditional model, and the revolutionary model. After careful examination of these models, they were judged as limited and inadequate in their theology and methodology to reach the urban middle strata with the Christian faith and life. The situational mission strategy model introduced by the thesis is aimed specifically at three levels: its geographic locus is the city; its sociological locus, the urban middle strata; and its strategic focus, urban youth, women, and students located within these strata. From some empirical evidence and sociological data, a case was made to support the belief that these loci are today's most strategic targets for the mission of urban Protestant churches in Colombia.

An attempt was made to formulate a new theological perspective which considers the priorities of the Christian message, the concept of the church, and an understanding of mission in the city context. The thesis concludes that the urban middle strata will respond to a non-polemical message which is Christ-centered, person-centered, and need-centered. Positive response means an emphasis on the church as koinonia instead of institution, and an openness to the world which thrusts the church into society to evangelize, witness, and serve.

Finally, the thesis contends that these theological priorities necessitate a different methodology based on the present realities. An effort to reach the urban middle strata means a new type of minister

who is accepting of the urban reality and is trained to be a mobilizer of the present resources in the church. It means a laity-centered church with greater centrifugal movement into urban society through cell-action groups who can be the evangelizers, witnesses, and servants of the middle strata person. Finally, situational methodology means a form of corporate unity in mission among urban Protestant churches and is essential to make a major impact for the Evangelical faith and church.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

- Allen, Roland. Missionary Methods: St. Paul's Or Ours. London: Scott, 1912.
- Bryson, Lyman (ed.) Social Change in Latin America Today. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.
- Cook, Harold R. Strategy of Missions. Chicago: Moody Press, 1963.
- Cox, Harvey G. (ed.) The Church Amid Revolution. New York: Association Press, 1967.
- Dix, Robert H. Colombia: The Political Dimensions of Change. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.
- Dorselaer, Jaime, and Alfonso Gregory. La Urbanización en América Latina (Urbanization in Latin America) Vol. I. Bogotá: Centro Internacional de Investigaciones Sociales de FERES, 1962.
- Fife, Eric, and Arthur Glasser. Missions in Crisis: Rethinking Missionary Strategy. Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961.
- Fluharty, Vernon Lee. Dance of the Millions. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1957.
- Galbraith, W. O. Colombia: A General Survey. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.
- Gensichen, Hans-Werner. Living Mission, Test of Faith. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966.
- Hauser, Philip M. (ed.) Urbanization in Latin America. New York: International Documents Service, 1961.
- Holt, Pat M. Colombia Today--And Tomorrow. New York: Praeger, 1964.
- Horner, Norman A. (ed.) Protestant Crosscurrents in Mission. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968.
- Johnson, John J. (ed.) Continuity and Change in Latin America. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964.
- _____. Political Change in Latin America: The Emergence of Middle Sectors. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958.
- Kessler, Jean Baptiste August, Jr. A Study of the Older Protestant Missions and Churches in Peru and Chile. Goes, Netherlands: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1967. (A doctoral thesis.)

- Lalive, Christian. El Refugio de las Masas. (The Refuge of the Masses). Santiago, Chile: Editorial del Pacifico, 1968.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin, and Aldo Solari (eds.) Elites in Latin America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Mackay, John A. The Other Spanish Christ. New York: Macmillan, 1932.
- Martz, John D. Colombia: A Contemporary Political Survey. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962.
- McGavran, Donald Anderson (ed.) Church Growth and Christian Mission. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.
- _____. The Bridges of God. New York: Friendship Press, 1955.
- Needler, Martin C. Political Development in Latin America: Instability, Violence, and Evolutionary Change. New York: Random House, 1968.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. Christ and Culture. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951.
- Niles, Daniel T. Upon the Earth. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962.
- Payne, James. Patterns of Conflict in Colombia. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.
- Read, William R., Victor M. Monterroso, and Harmon A. Johnson. Latin American Church Growth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969.
- Roberts, W. Dayton. Revolution in Evangelism. Chicago: Moody Press, 1967.
- Romoli, Kathleen. Colombia: Gateway to South America. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran, 1941.
- Rycroft, W. Stanley, and Myrtle M. Clemmer. A Study of Urbanization in Latin America. New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1963.
- Rycroft, W. Stanley. Religion and Faith in Latin America. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958.
- Smalley, William A. (ed.) Readings in Missionary Anthropology. Tarrytown, New York: Practical Anthropology, 1967.
- Smith, Eugene L. Mandate for Mission. New York: Friendship Press, 1968.
- Smith, T. Lynn. Colombia. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967.

- Strachan, R. Kenneth. The Inescapable Calling. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968.
- Taylor, John V. For All the World. London: Stoughton and Hodder, 1966.
- Wagley, Charles (ed.) Social Science Research on Latin America. New York: Columbia University Press, 1964.
- _____. The Latin American Tradition. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.
- Webber, George W. The Congregation in Mission. New York: Abingdon Press, 1964.
- Webster, Douglas. Yes To Mission. New York: Seabury Press, 1966.
- Wilgus, A. Curtis (ed.) The Caribbean: Contemporary Colombia. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962.
- Willems, Emilio. Followers of the New Faith. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967.
- Winter, Gibson. The New Creation as Metropolis. New York: Macmillan, 1963.

B. PERIODICALS

- Beals, Ralph L. "Social Stratification in Latin America," American Journal of Sociology, LVIII:4 (January 1953), 327-39.
- Bishop, Jordan. "Numerical Growth--An Adequate Criterion of Mission?" International Review of Missions, LVII:227 (July 1968), 284-90.
- Castro, Emilio. "Evangelism in Latin America," International Review of Missions, LIII:212 (October 1964), 452-56.
- _____. "Protestantism and the Latin American Conscience," Latin American News Letter, LXVIII (July 1968), 10-11.
- Colombia Information Service. "Colombia--Basic Data & Economic Indicators," Colombia Today, IV:3 (March 1969), 6.
- Eder, George Jackson. "Urban Concentration, Agriculture, and Agrarian Reform," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCLIX (July 1965), 27-47.
- Emery, James. "The Preparation of Leaders in a Ladino-Indian Church," Practical Anthropology, X:3 (May-June 1963), 127-34.

- Fals-Borda, Orlando. "Una Estrategia para la Iglesia en la Transformación de América Latina," ("A Strategy for the Church in the Transformation of Latin America"), Cristianismo y Sociedad (Christianity and Society), II:6 (1964), 31-39.
- Fenton, Horace L. "Missions and Revolution," Latin America Evangelist, XLIX:2 (March-April 1969), 3-5.
- Glasser, Arthur. "Current Strategy in Missions," HIS, XXII:1 (October 1961), 8-14.
- Guzzardi, Walter, Jr. "The Crucial Middle Class," Fortune, LXV:2 (February 1962), 98-100, 210-14.
- Hodges, Melvin L. "A Pentecostal's View of Mission Strategy," International Review of Missions, LVII:227 (July 1968), 304-10.
- Housley, John B. "Review Article: Church Growth and Christian Mission," International Review of Missions, LVII:227 (July 1968), 358-62.
- Johnson, John J. "The Political Role of the Latin-American Middle Sectors," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCXXXIV (March 1961), 20-29.
- Iyall, Leslie T. "Missionary Strategy in the Twentieth Century," Evangelical Missions Quarterly, II:2 (Winter 1966), 65-79.
- Míguez, José. "Theological Education for a Church in Transition," Viewpoint of a Latin American, International Review of Missions, XLIX:194 (April 1960), 148-56.
- Murphy, Edward F. "How a Dead Church Came to Life," Evangelical Missions Quarterly, VI:1 (Fall 1969), 41-47.
- Nida, Eugene A. "Communication of the Gospel to Latin Americans," Practical Anthropology, VIII:4 (July-August 1961), 145-56.
- _____. "Culture and Church Growth," Practical Anthropology, XII:1 (January-February 1965), 22-37.
- _____. "Current Strategy in Missions: Communication," HIS, XXII:6 (March 1962), 22-26, 32.
- Noble, Lowell L. "Can St. Paul's Methods Be Ours?" Practical Anthropology, IV:4 (July-August 1961), 180-85.
- Peters, G. W. "Church Growth in Colombia," Evangelical Missions Quarterly, II:3 (Spring 1967), 166-70.
- Roberts, W. Dayton. "Latin American Protestants: Which Way Will They Go?" Christianity Today, XIV:1 (October 10, 1969), 14-16.

- _____. "Witnessing 'Up,'" HIS, XXIII:9 (June 1963), 10-12, 16.
- Sabanes, Carlos M. "Urbanization in Latin America," International Review of Missions, LV:219 (July 1966), 307-12.
- Saunders, Lyle. "'Anglo' and Spanish-Speaking Americans: Contrasts and Similarities," Practical Anthropology, VII:5 (September-October 1960), 193-204.
- Shaul, M. Richard. "The New Latin Revolutionaries and the U.S.," Christian Century, LXXXV:3 (January 17, 1968), 69-70.
- Smalley, William A. "A Case of Unity, if not Ecumenicity," Practical Anthropology, IX:4 (July-August 1962), 185-88.
- Strachan, R. Kenneth. "Call to Witness," International Review of Missions, LIII:210 (April 1964), 191-200.
- _____. "Tomorrow's Task in Latin America," Christianity Today, III:6 (December 22, 1958), 3-6.
- Tyson, Brady. "Romantic Revolutionaries as False Prophets," Latin American News Letter, Special Supplement, LXVI (December 1967), 14.
- Walker, Alan. "Where Pentecostalism is Mushrooming," Christian Century, LXXXV:3 (January 17, 1968), 81-82.
- Williamson, Robert C. "University Students in a World of Change: A Colombian Sample," Sociology and Social Research, XLVIII:4 (July 1964), 397-413.
- Wipfler, William L. "Is the Traditional Concept of Mission Work Still Workable in Latin America?" Latin American News Letter, LXVIII (July 1968), 1.
- Wonderly, William L., and Eugene A. Nida. "Cultural Differences and the Communication of Christian Values," Practical Anthropology, X:6 (November-December 1963), 241-58.
- Wonderly, William L., and Jorge Lara-Braud. "Some Convictions of a Young Church," Practical Anthropology, XIV:1 (January-February 1967), 1-14.
- Wonderly, William L. "The Indigenous Background of Religion in Latin America," Practical Anthropology, XIV:6 (November-December 1967), 241-48.
- Valencia, Héctor G. "Progress Under Persecution," Christianity Today, VII:21 (July 19, 1963), 13-14.

Voelkel, Jack. "Our Struggle in the Latin Universities," Latin America Evangelist, XLIX:5 (September-October 1969), 1-4.

C. MISCELLANEOUS

Advisory Study Committee. "An Advisory Study," New York: Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1961, pp. 1-94.

Allan, Alexander M. "Before the Mast and Behind the Pulpit." Original manuscript submitted to the Revell Centennial Contest by John H. Sinclair with permission of the author. New York: United Presbyterian Mission Library, June 1968, pp. 1-166. (Mimeographed)

Chartier, Ricardo A. "El Desafío Urbano," ("The Urban Challenge") Buenos Aires: Methopress, 1965, pp. 7-27.

Clark, Allen D. "Tentative History of the Colombia Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A." New York: United Presbyterian Mission Library, pp. 1-117. (Mimeographed)

Cook, Arnold. "Urban Evangelism," Cali, Colombia: December 1968, pp. 1-11. (Mimeographed)

Episcopal Church of Colombia. "Valores y Actitudes Religiosos de los Bachilleres Egresados en 1955 en Bogotá," Estudio sobre permanencia de Valores Religiosos, ("Religious Values and Attitudes of High School Students Graduated in 1955 in Bogotá," A Study of the Permanence of Religious Values), Bogotá: ICODES de Colombia, 1967.

Goff, James E. "Census of Protestant Church Members in Colombia: 1969." Bogotá: Office of Information and Public Relations, Evangelical Confederation of Colombia (CEDEC), April 1969, pp. 1-9. (Mimeographed)

_____. "Letter to Howard J. Habegger," Bogotá: May 18, 1969, p. 1.

_____. "The Persecution of Protestant Christians in Colombia, 1948 to 1958, With An Investigation of Its Background and Causes," An unpublished Th.D. Dissertation. San Anselmo, California: San Francisco Theological Seminary, April 1965.

Golconda Priest Group, "Manifesto on the Colombian Social Order," Bogotá: El Tiempo (The Times), (April 13, 1969), pp. 1-4. (Mimeographed by James E. Goff, April 19, 1969).

Greenway, Roger S. "Planting Neighborhood Churches in Latin American Cities," Mexico City: Instituto Cristiano Mexicano (Mexican Christian Institute), (November 1969), pp. 1-15.

- Jones, Henry D. "Christian Responsibility in Latin America's Emerging Industrial Society," New York: Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, 1959, pp. 3-20.
- King, Louis L. "Urbanization and Missions," New York: Christian and Missionary Alliance (November 1960), pp. 1-5.
- Liggett, Thomas J. "Latin America--A Challenge to Protestantism." Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico: Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, 1959, pp. 1-11.
- Nida, Eugene A. "The Indigenous Churches." New York: Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, 1960, pp. 1-14.
- Ruoss, Meryl. "New Factors in the Expanding Urban Situation." New York: Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, 1960, pp. 1-11.
- Schultz, Paul T. "Internal Migration in Colombia: A Quantitative Analysis," Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, August 1968, pp. 1-31.

337505

**THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.**